

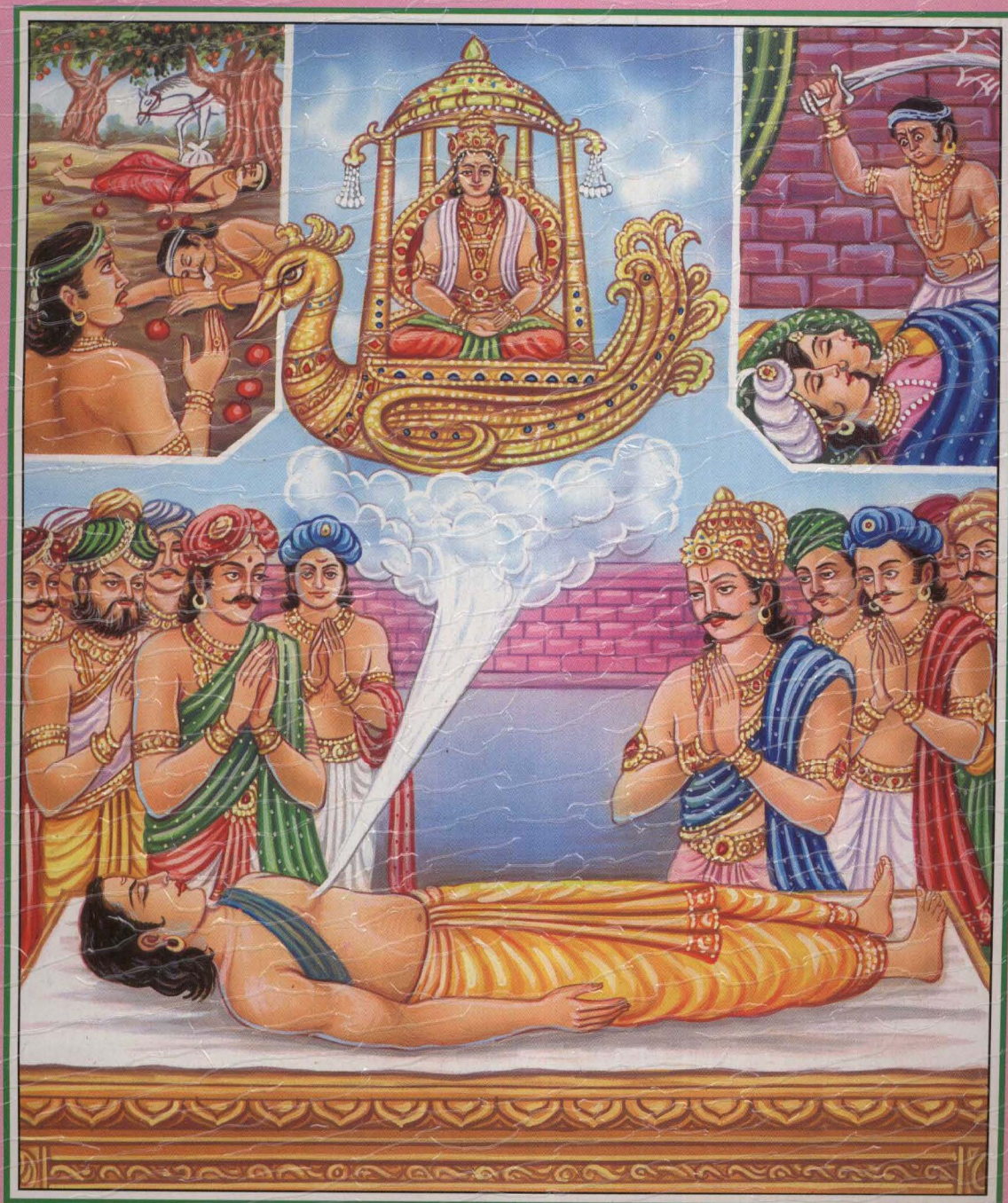


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Bunkachula

(The benefits of vows and codes)



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

In life conditions are never uniform. Sometimes there is happiness and at others there is sorrow; sometimes it is profit and sometimes it is loss. Such rise and fall are part of life. Due to this on occasions one is filled with excitement and enthusiasm and on occasions he is depressed with sorrow. The path of life is very complex. To move on such path it is essential to take support of vows and codes of conduct. These codes give strength to our will power and thereby show the right direction.

In Jain literature there is a beautiful story on observing the codes — The story of Bunkachula. This story conveys how a person changes the direction of his life from fall to rise with the power of strong determination.

Bunkachula was a prince, who got spoiled in his childhood due to doting affection and became slave of bad habits. Finally his father exiled him from the kingdom. Wandering around he came to a colony of bandits. He joined them and after becoming their chief he indulged in theft and robbery. He became completely reckless and evil. But one who falls, rises as well. One day Bunkachula came in contact with an ascetic observing austerities. The ascetic made him take four vows. As he was impressed by the ascetics austere way of life he willingly accepted all the four vows.

The very next day came the test of his resolve. He remained unmoved in his first vow and his life was saved. The second vow saved his wife and dear sister. Due to the third vow he regained his lost royal grandeur and honour. During the last days of his life the fourth vow gave him a divine rebirth.

In this story of Bunkachula the qualitative results of observing vows and the code have been shown. Observing the vows and code with determination builds a mans character and he gets benefits in his life. Each one of us should accept some good vows and codes in life.

Muni Shri Vimalchandra ji M. Sa of Shraman Sangh, the epitome of austerities, used to recite the story of Bunkachula eloquently in his discourses on vows and codes. Based on his discourses his able and saintly disciple Shri Virendra Muni ji has edited this picture story. We express our gratitude to him.

—Sanjay Surana

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BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

In ancient times Dhinpuri was a prosperous city. Its king, Vimalyash, was just and benevolent. Queen Kamalvati was a religious woman having faith in Jainism. They had a son and a daughter named Pushpachula and Pushpachulaa. The noble natured royal couple loved their children very much.

Lovely kids ! We should grant them all their wishes and keep them happy.

Sire ! Excessive love and affection is not good.

Father ! I want to go play with friends.

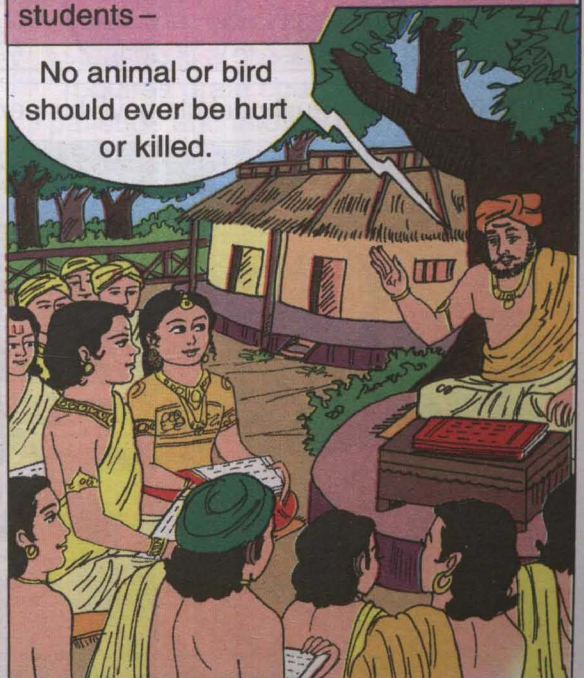
Due to excessive doting the prince got spoiled right from his childhood and in due course acquired bad habits. His naughty mind always moved in wrong direction.

When they came of age, the prince and the princess were sent to school for studies. One day the teacher said to the students –

Great ! Prince, you took the sweets and the shop owner didn't even know.

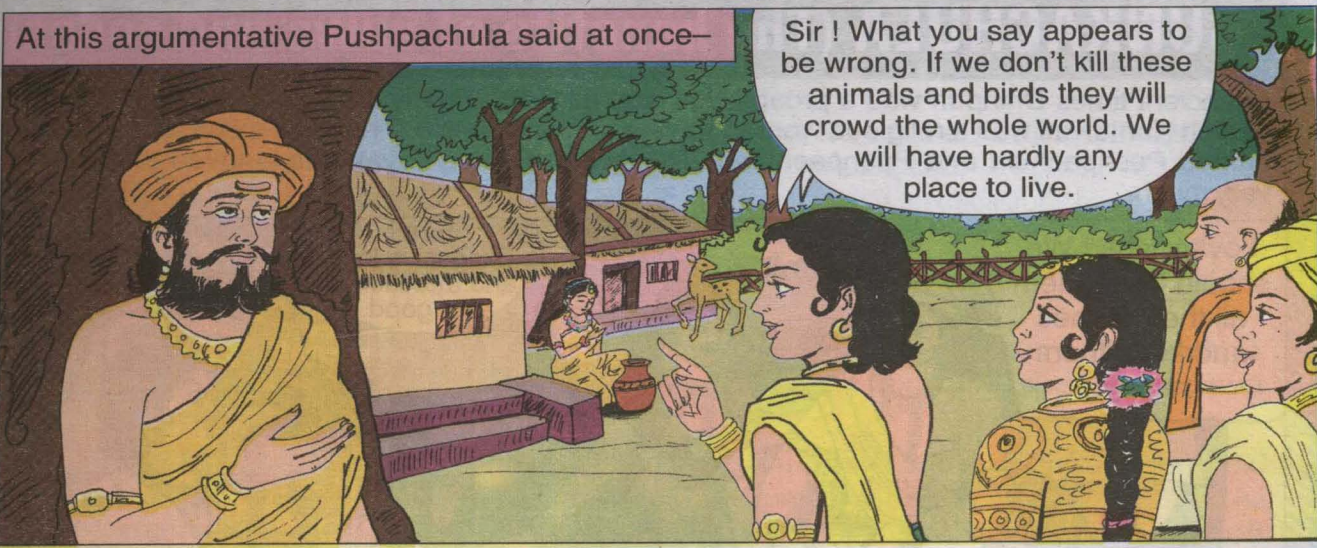
You just enjoy sweets. This is child's play for me.

No animal or bird should ever be hurt or killed.



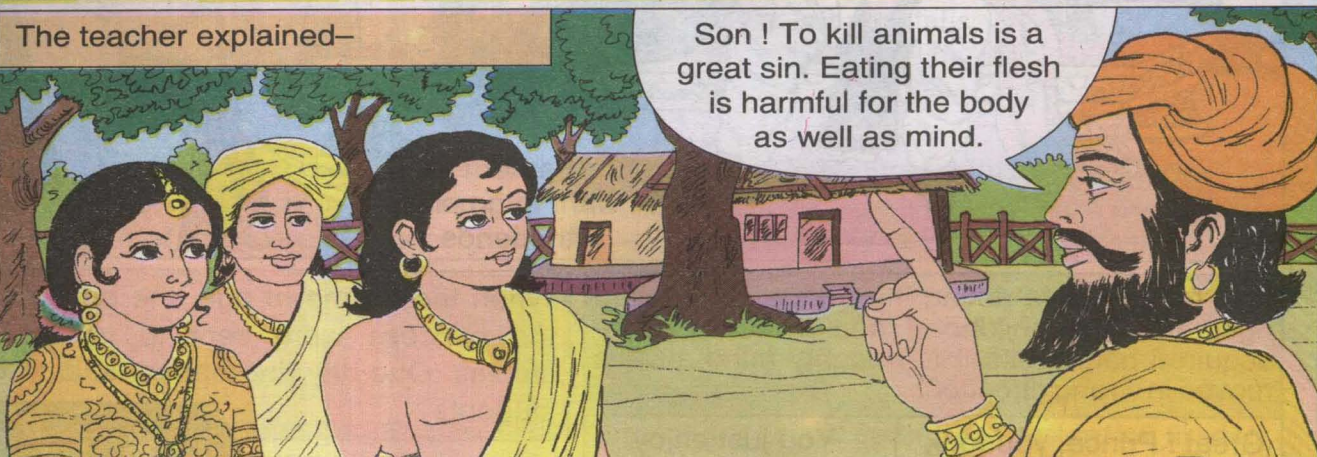
BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

At this argumentative Pushpachula said at once—



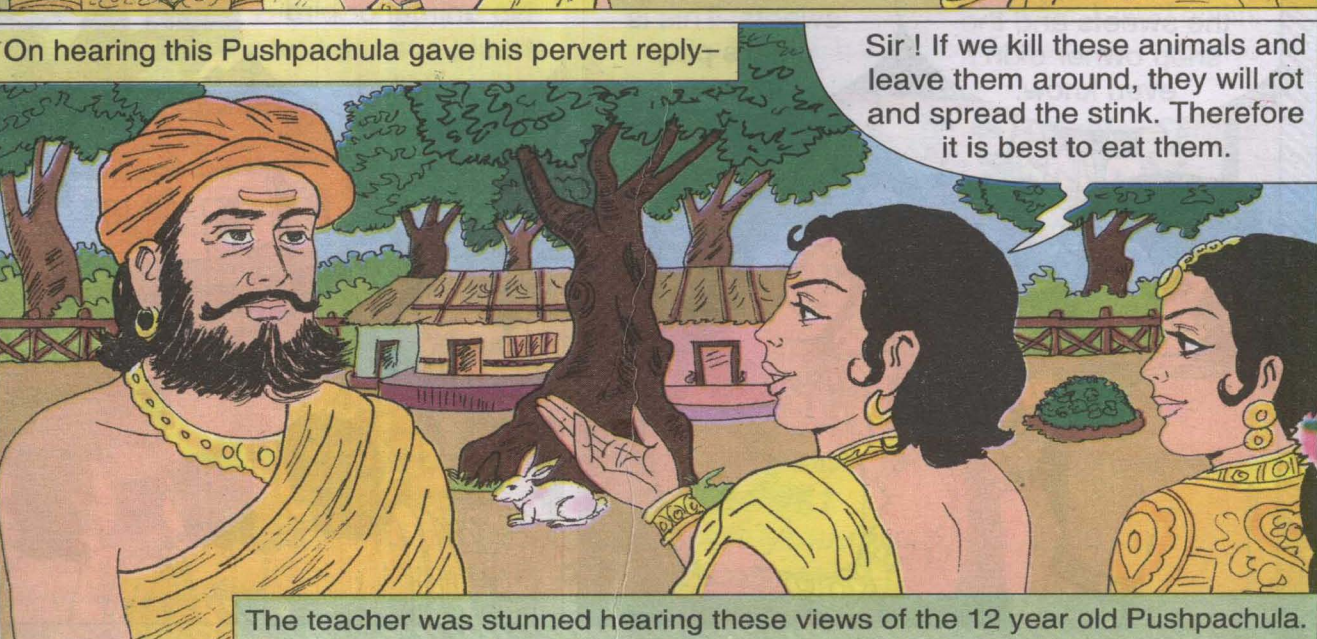
Sir ! What you say appears to be wrong. If we don't kill these animals and birds they will crowd the whole world. We will have hardly any place to live.

The teacher explained—



Son ! To kill animals is a great sin. Eating their flesh is harmful for the body as well as mind.

On hearing this Pushpachula gave his pervert reply—



Sir ! If we kill these animals and leave them around, they will rot and spread the stink. Therefore it is best to eat them.

The teacher was stunned hearing these views of the 12 year old Pushpachula.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Next day he went to the king, presented the views of Pushpachula and added –

Sire ! The prince always opposes scriptures and moral teachings. Kindly discipline him.

Acharyashri ! The prince is still like soft clay. Please continue to polish him with moral teachings and scriptures, I am sure he will improve.

When the guru left, the king called Pushpachula and explained him –

Son ! Killing of living beings and eating meat are causes of downfall in life. Always avoid them.

But father's advice had no effect on Pushpachula.

One day in Gurukul the acharya came to know that Pushpachula indulged in gambling and theft. He tried to reform him –

Son ! These two bad habits are terrible sins. A thief suffers in this life and his next life is also spoiled.

Pushpachula said –

Sir ! You don't know, stealing is a great art. It requires great courage, patience and intelligence. Everyone cannot learn this art.

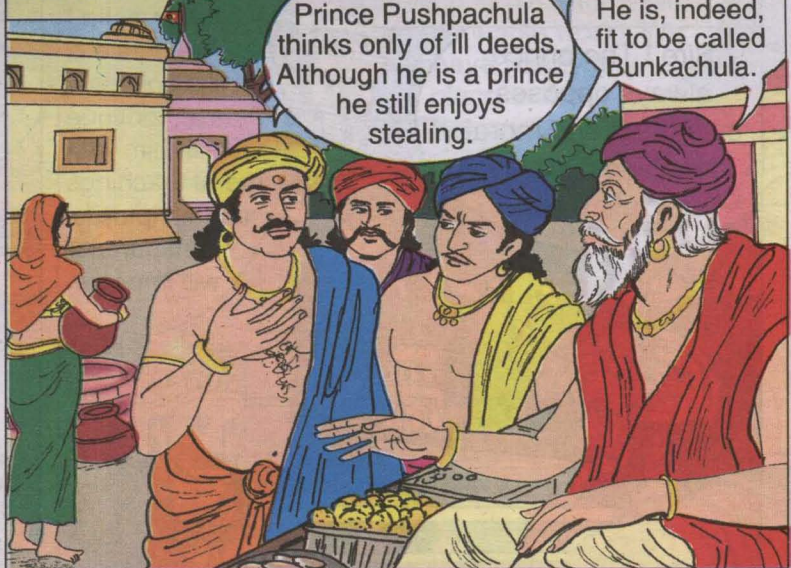
BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Hearing this wicked logic from the prince, the acharya was frustrated –

He always has wrong ideas.
He has a bent (Bunk) mind.
His name Pushpachula is misfit;
such evil person should be
called Bunkachula.

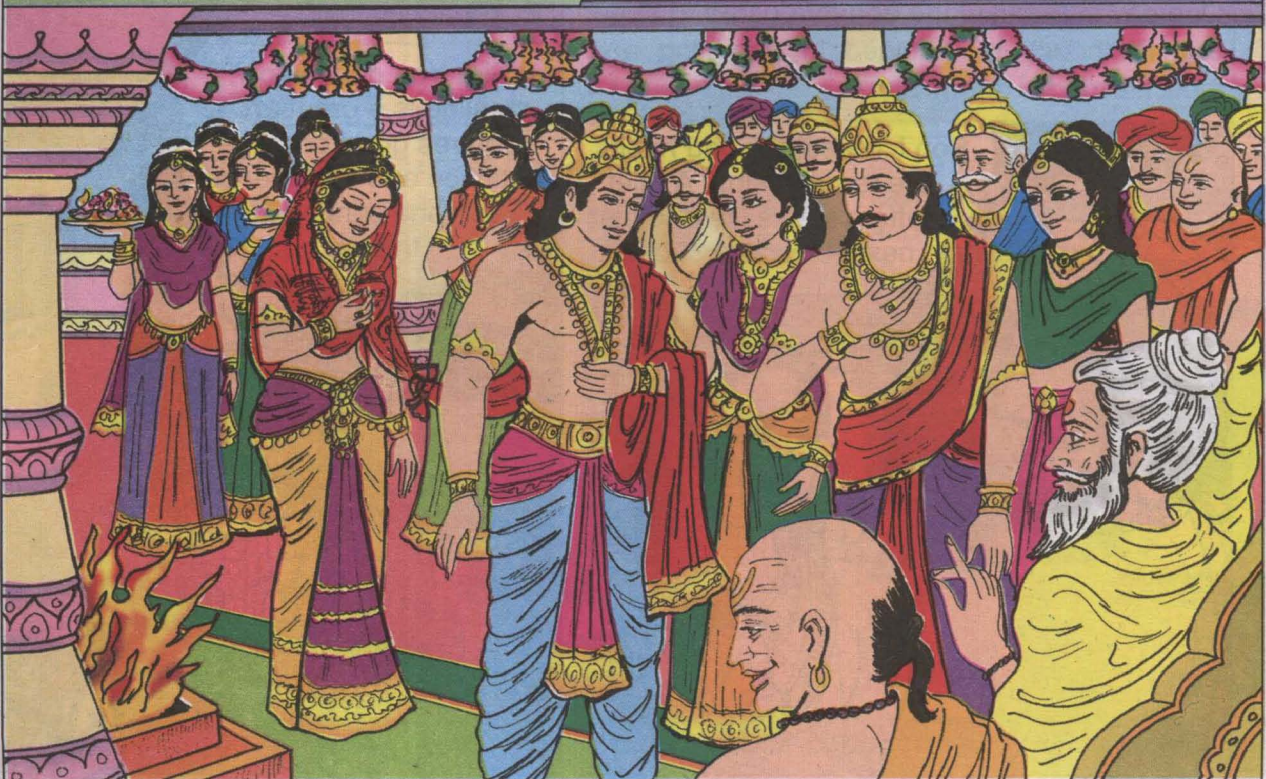


Soon the pervert mind of the prince became the talk of the town –



In due course his name changed from Pushpachula to Bunkachula. As his sister, princess Pushpachulaa was also evil minded, people also started calling her Bunkachulaa.

The two returned to the palace after completing their education. After some time the king found a suitable girl and married the prince.



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Once some Jain saints came to Dhinpuri. The discourses of ahimsa and compassion for animals impressed the king and he made an announcement –

Since this day hunting of wild animals is banned. Sale and purchase of meat and wine are also prohibited.

Great ! How noble is the thinking of our king.

Indeed, he is a benevolent ruler.

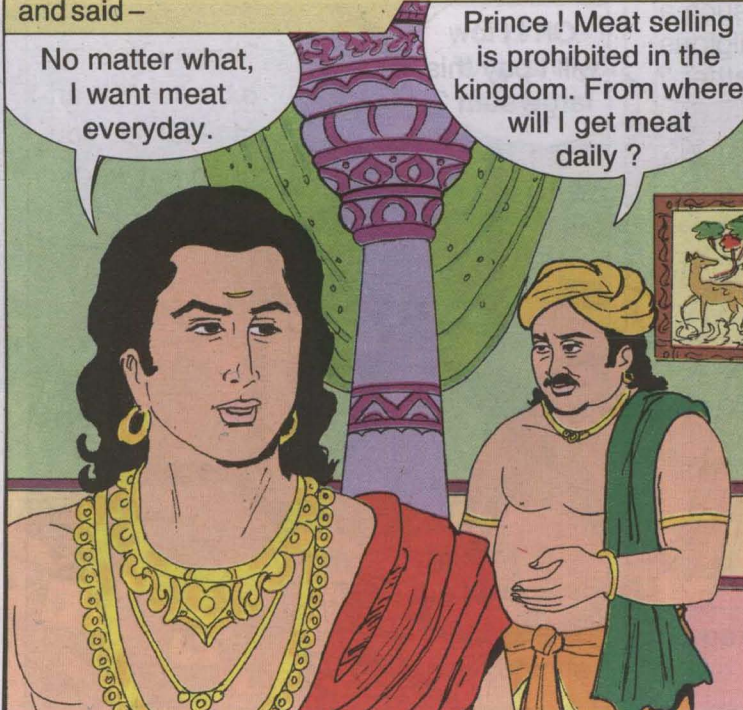


The announcement spread a wave of joy in the masses.

As there is darkness under a lamp, so prince Pushpachula was addicted to eating meat daily. After the announcement by the king, he called the cook and said –

No matter what, I want meat everyday.

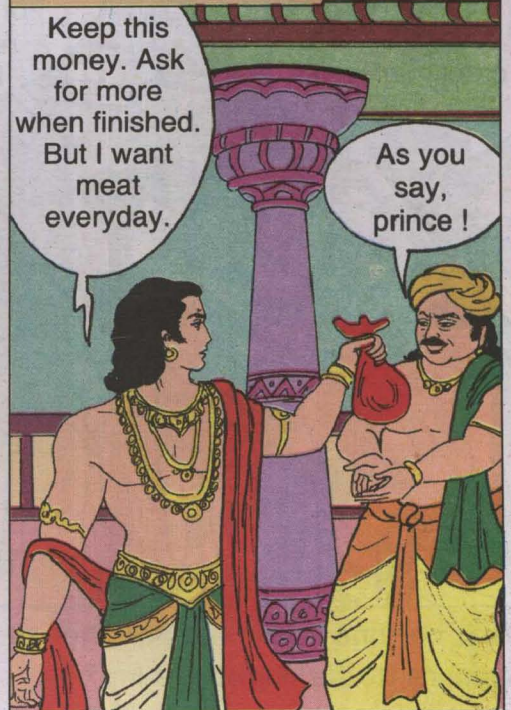
Prince ! Meat selling is prohibited in the kingdom. From where will I get meat daily ?



The prince gave a bag full of coins to the cook and said –

Keep this money. Ask for more when finished. But I want meat everyday.

As you say, prince !



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The greedy cook caught a child everyday.

Help ! Help !
Leave me !

The prince will
certainly reward
me after eating
its soft meat.

He cooked the meat of the child and served it to the prince.

There was hue and cry in the town when kids started vanishing. On investigation the cook was caught and beaten up –

Tell us where
you take the
kids ?

It is not my
fault. I do all this
on the order from
the prince.

And the cook told the truth in detail. People were taken aback on hearing this.

O God ! Such
cruel man-eater
is our prince ?

Such evil son
of such a
religious
father ?

But no one could gather the courage to complain to the king about him.

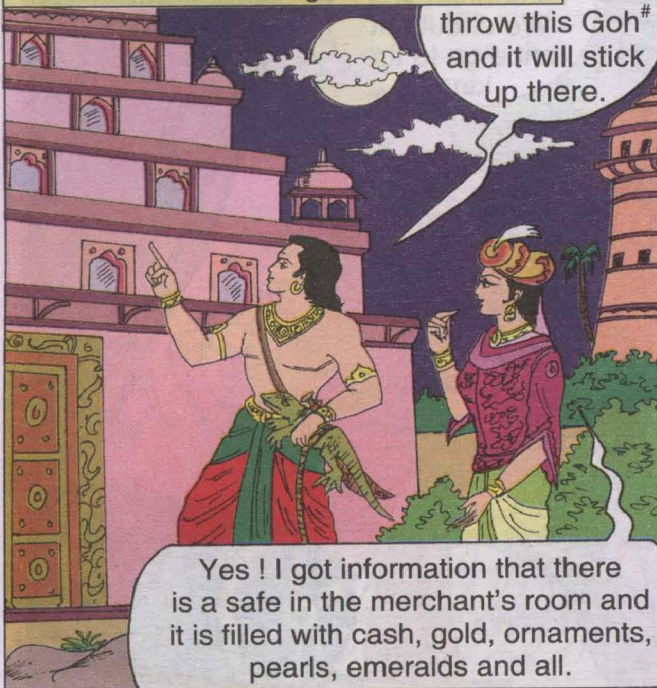
Bunkachula was also very fond of gambling. One day he lost heavily.

Oh ! How
will I pay this
large sum ?

Prince ! You are
expert in the art
of stealing. You
need not worry.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

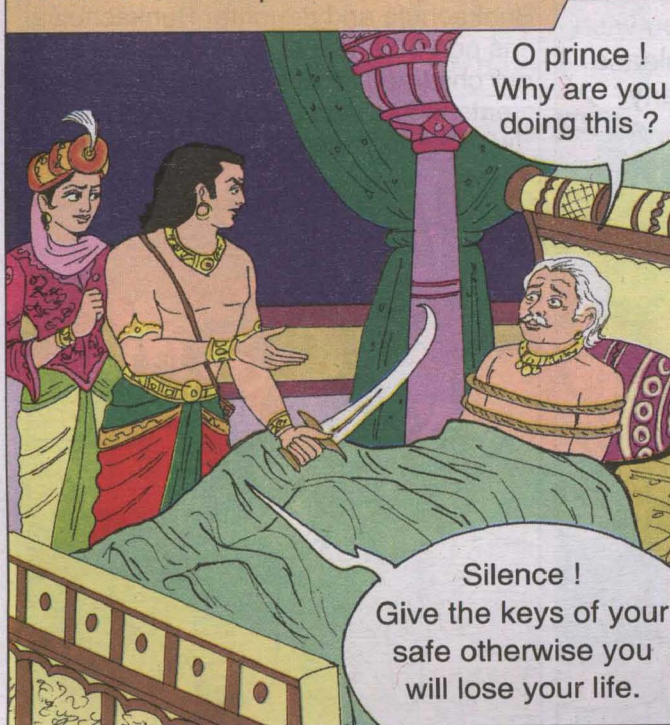
After mutual consultation the brother-sister team came to the seven storied house of a merchant at midnight.



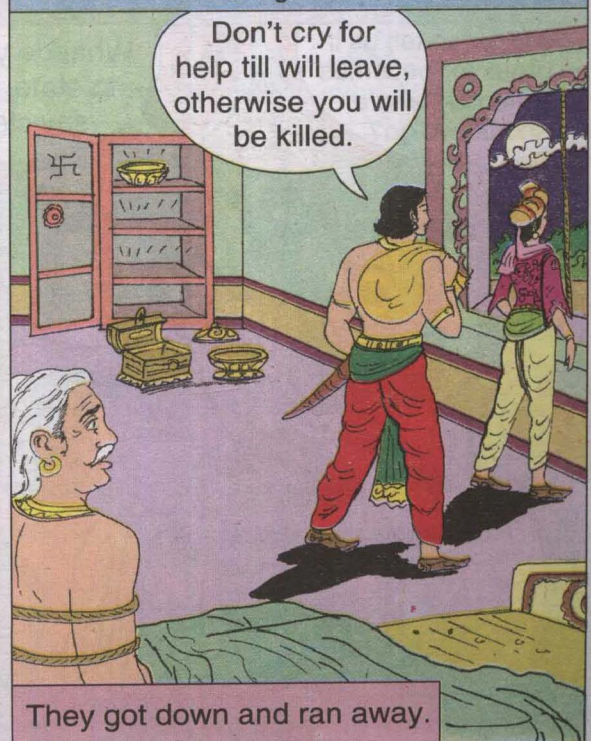
The two climbed up the seventh floor room of the merchant with the help of a rope.



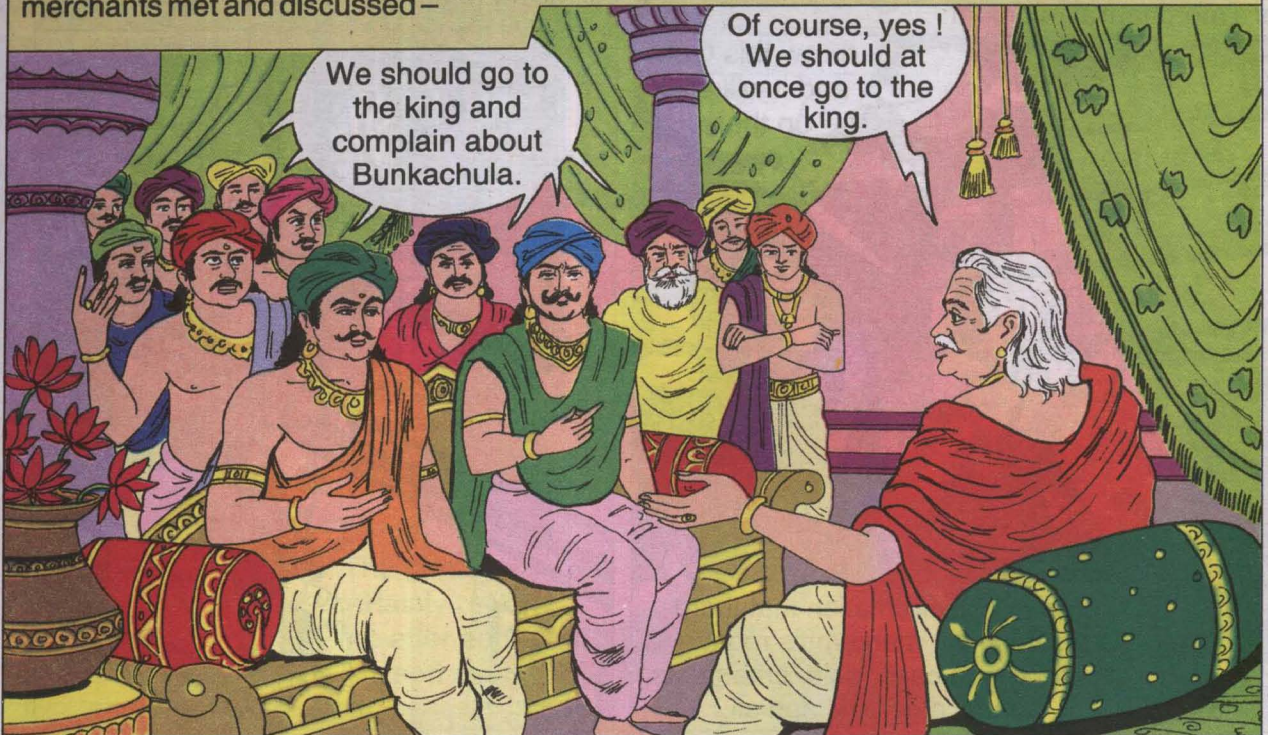
Bunkachula tied the merchant tight with a rope. This brought him awake. When he saw the prince he uttered with surprise –



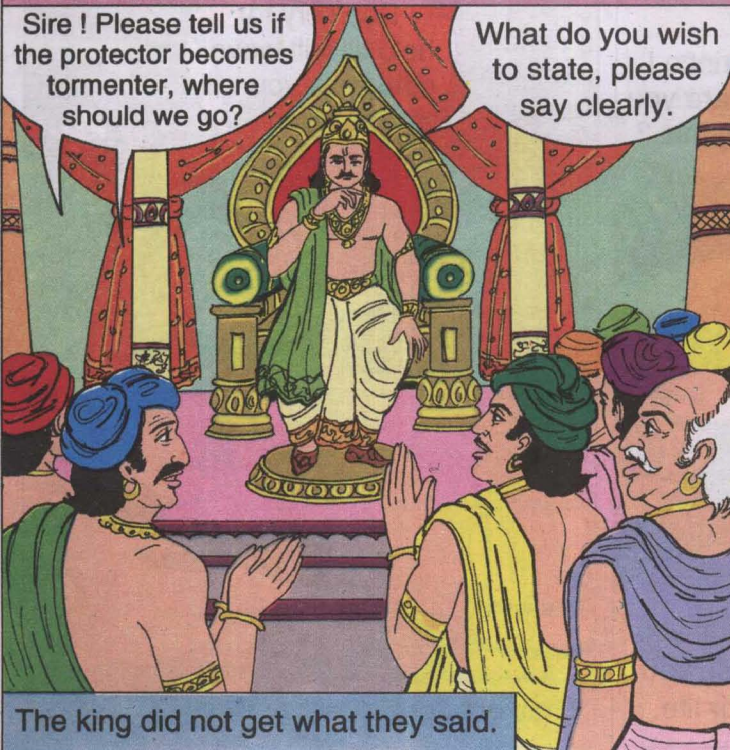
The merchant was afraid as well as helpless. The two collected all the wealth from the safe in a bag.



These habits of Bunkachula disturbed the people very much. Some prominent citizens and merchants met and discussed –

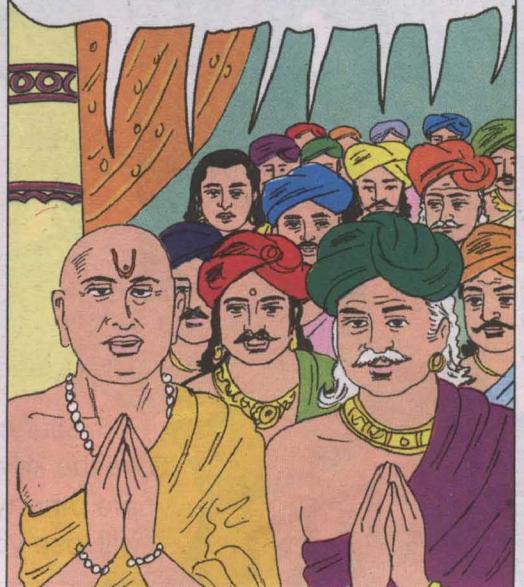


Next day the sad citizens went to the king's court with their complaint. They greeted king Vimalyash and submitted –



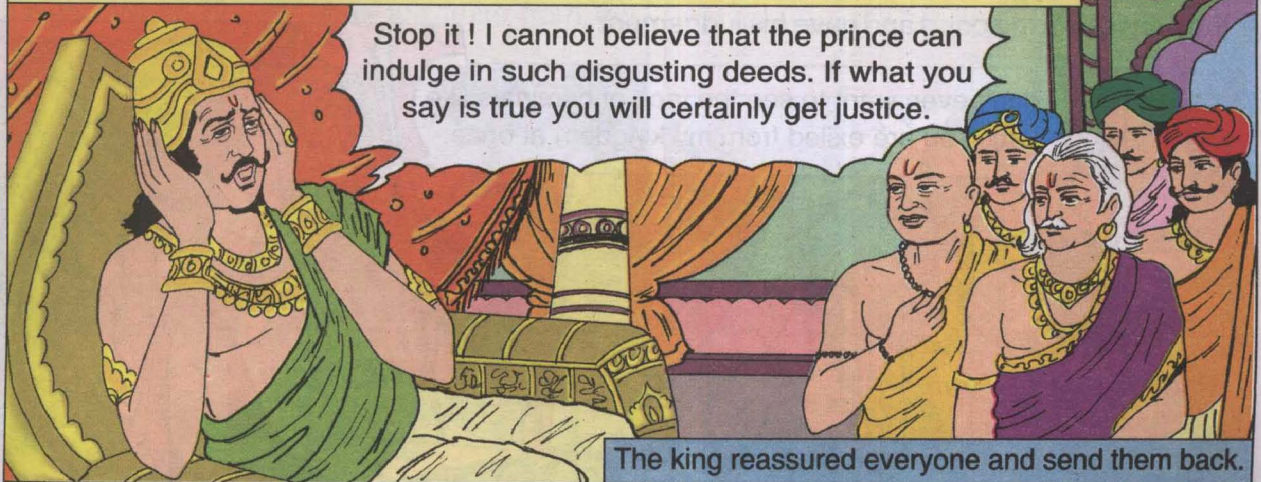
The citizens gathered courage and said–

Sire ! If you really want to hear, here it is. The behaviour of your son Bunkachula and daughter Bunkachulaa is pervert and evil. Bunkachula gets our children kidnapped by his cook and eats their meat. During the night the two steal our wealth from our houses.



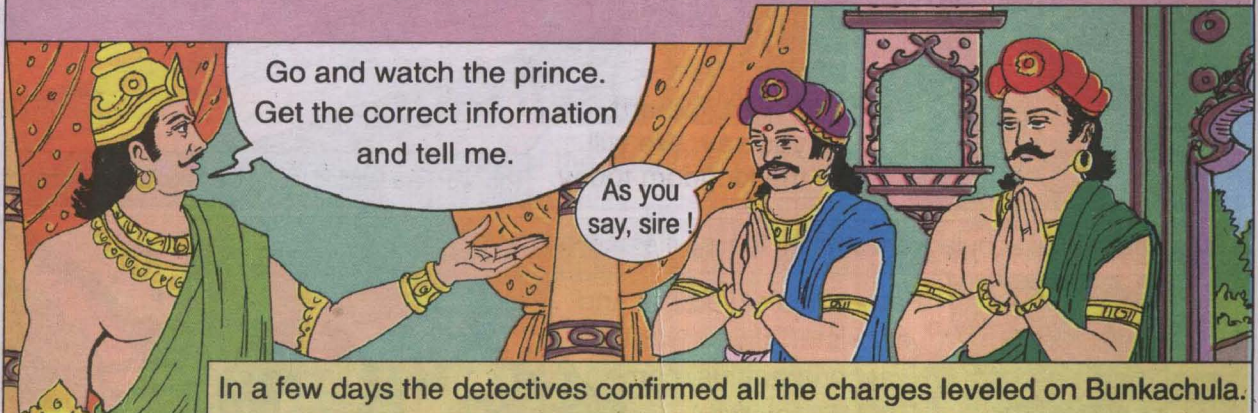
BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The king was stunned hearing such grave complaint. He covered his ears with his palms and shouted –

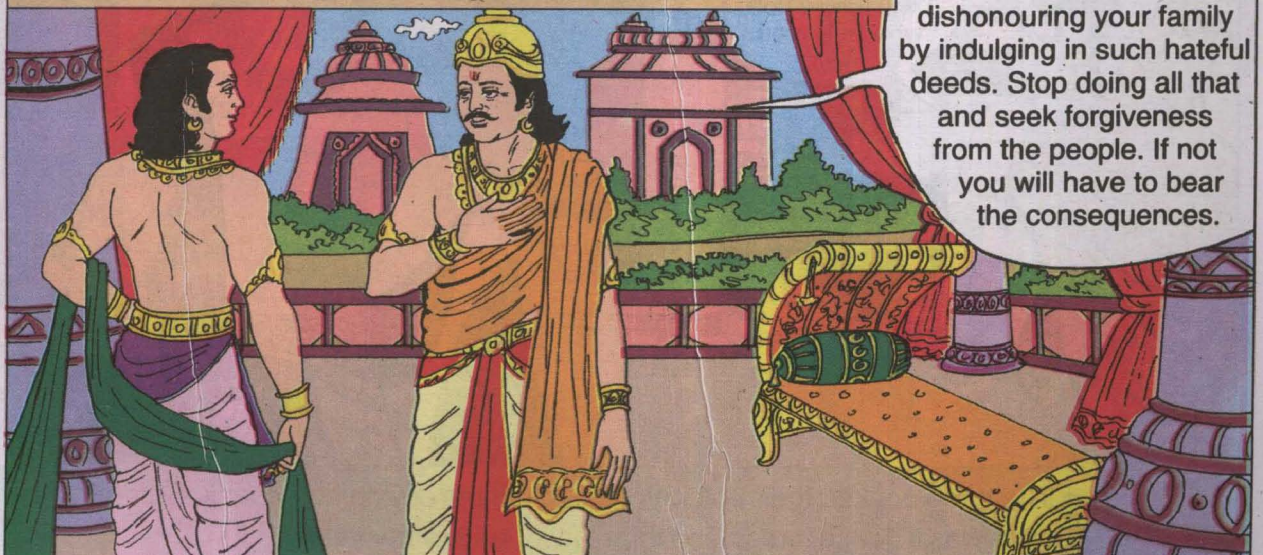


The king reassured everyone and send them back.

After they left, the king called his senior detectives and ordered –

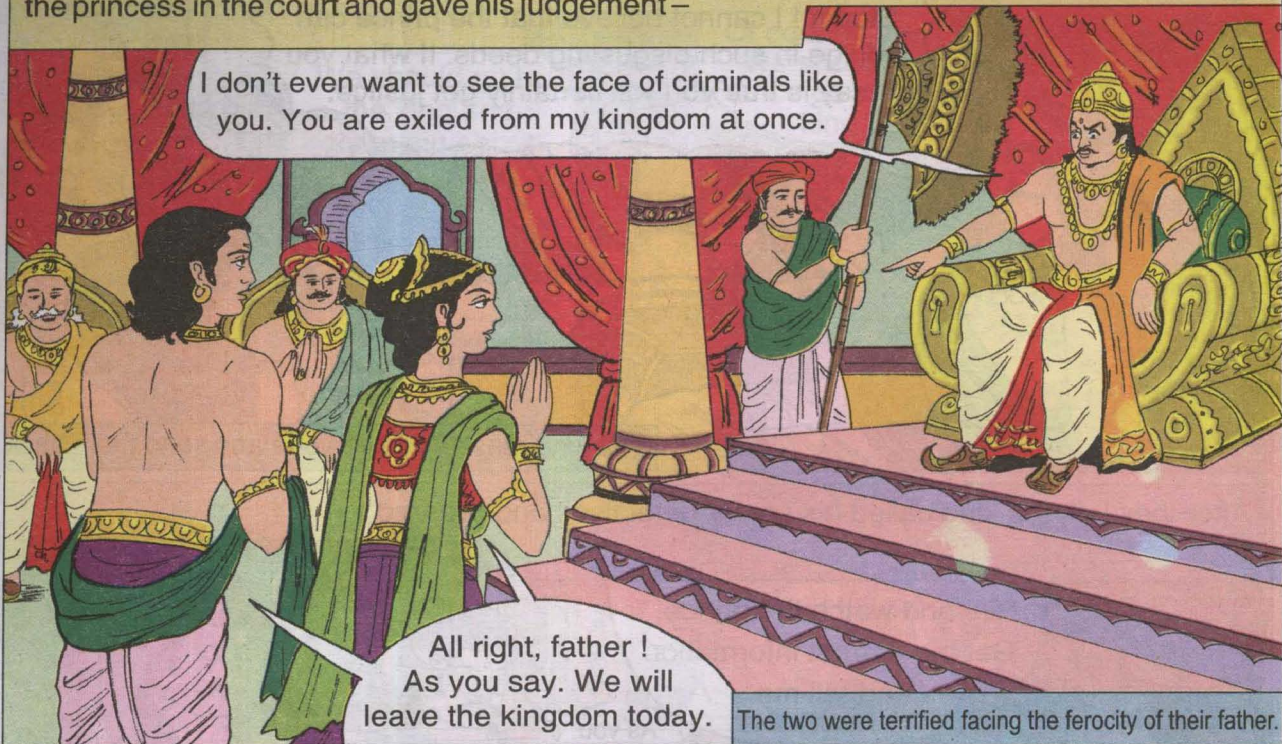


Now the king called Bunkachula and tried to correct him through advise, reprimand and threat –

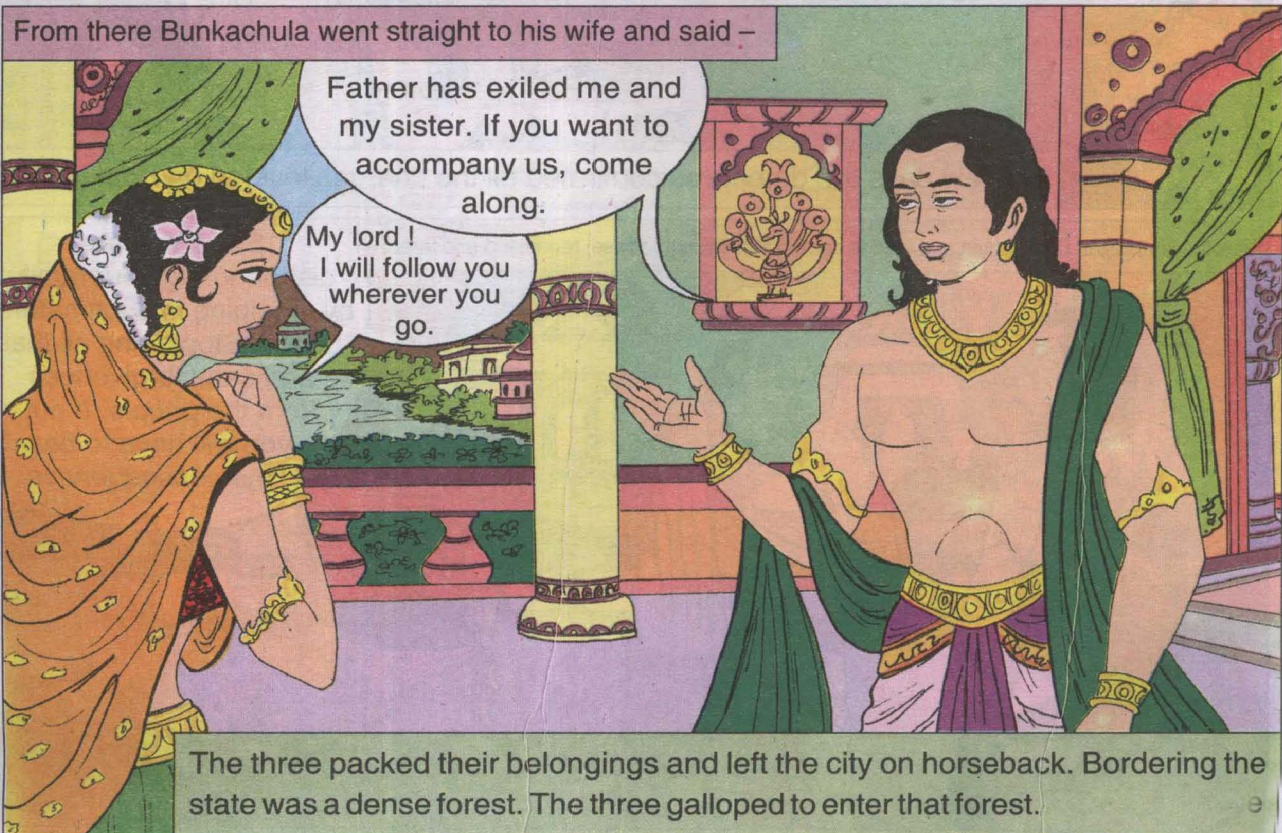


BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

But father's advise had no effect on Bunkachula. At last the king one day called the prince and the princess in the court and gave his judgement –

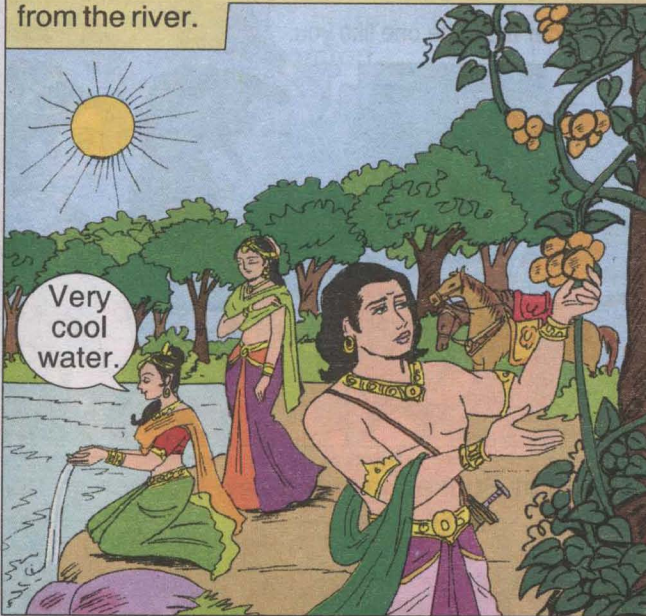


From there Bunkachula went straight to his wife and said –

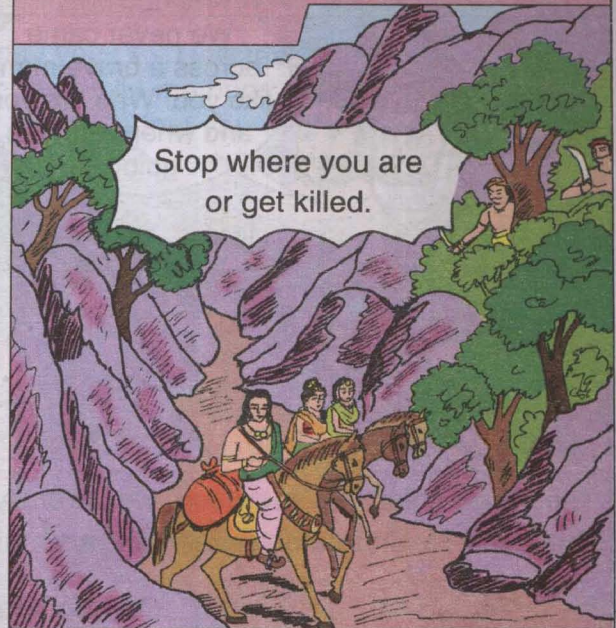


BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

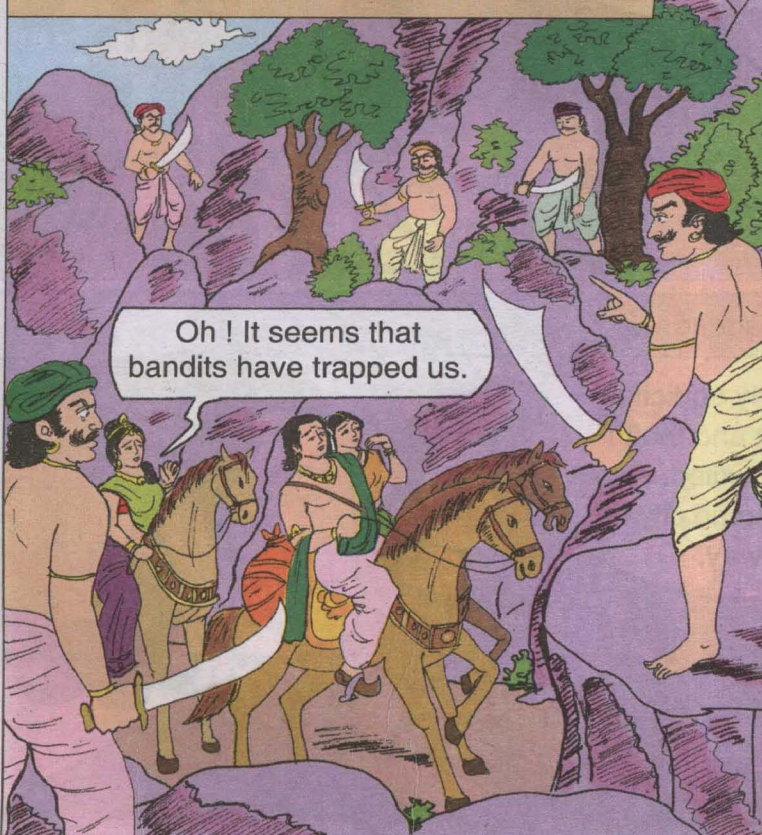
They traveled during the day and rested at night. When hungry, they ate fruits from the trees and drank water from the river.



While moving on a narrow trail between two hills they heard a harsh warning —



The prince looked up in the direction of the sound and saw fierce armed bandits all around on the hills.

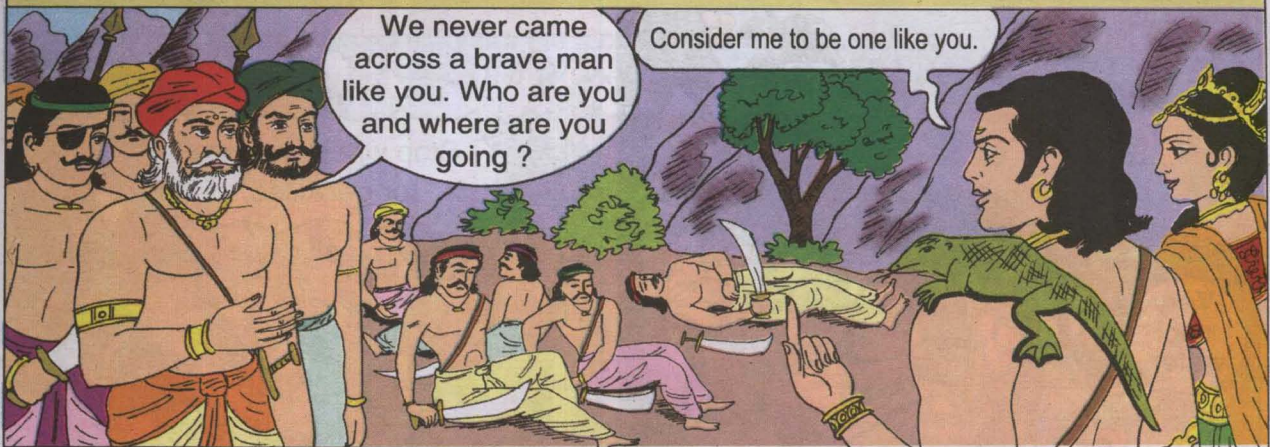


But prince Bunkachula was courageous. He challenged the bandits —

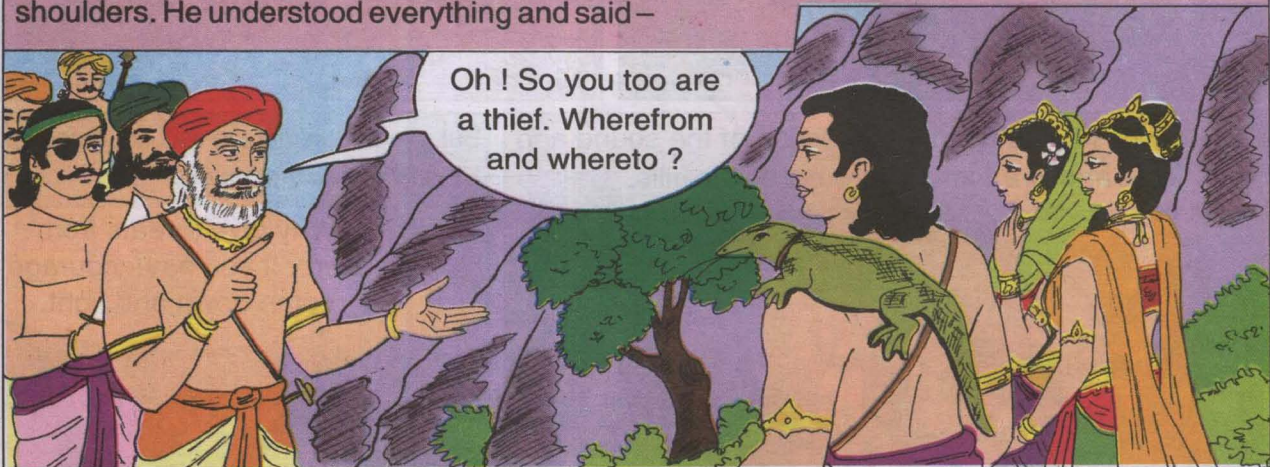


BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

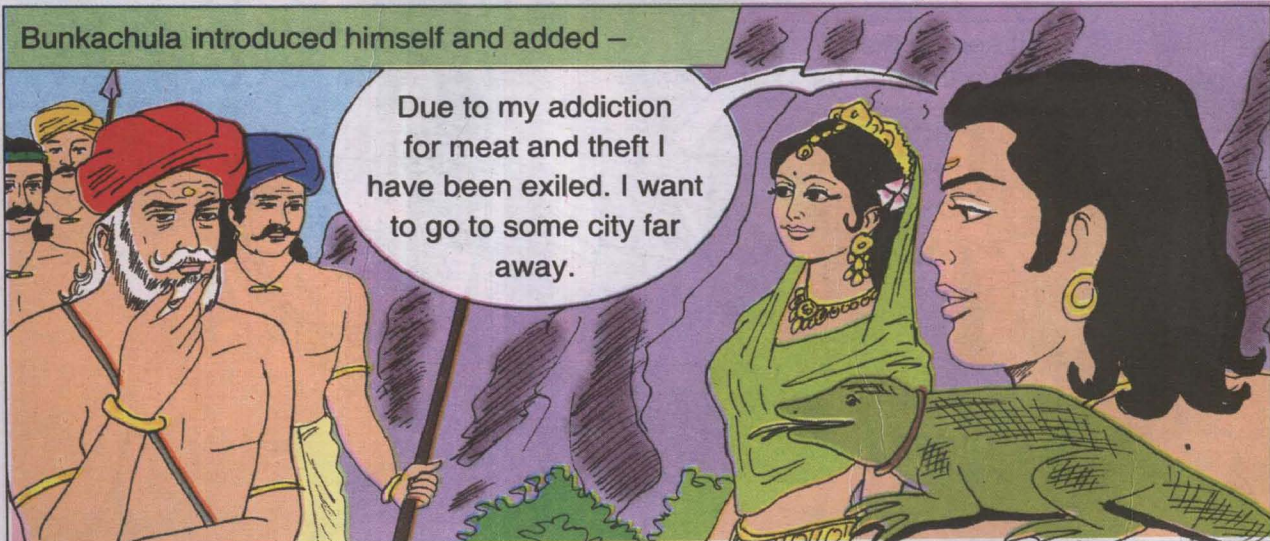
The bandits came down and attacked the prince. They failed to match his skill with the sword and soon surrendered. Their chief said –



The bandit chief was surprised. He carefully looked at Bunkachula and saw the Goh on his shoulders. He understood everything and said –



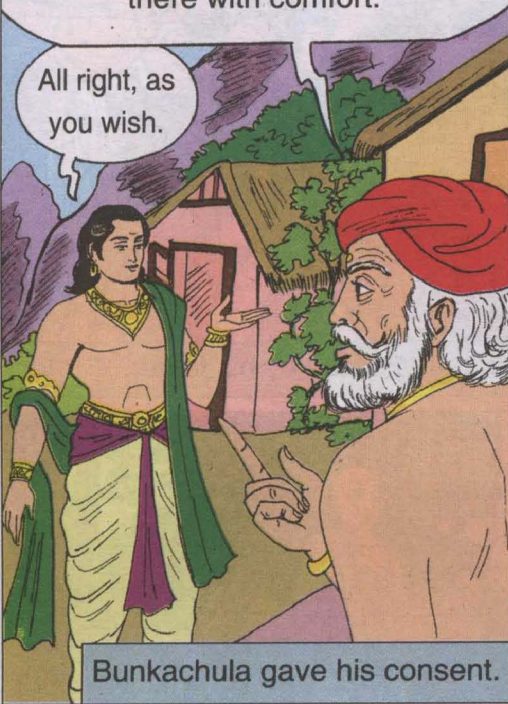
Bunkachula introduced himself and added –



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

A brave warrior like you need not go anywhere. Nearby is our thief-colony. You may live there with comfort.

All right, as you wish.

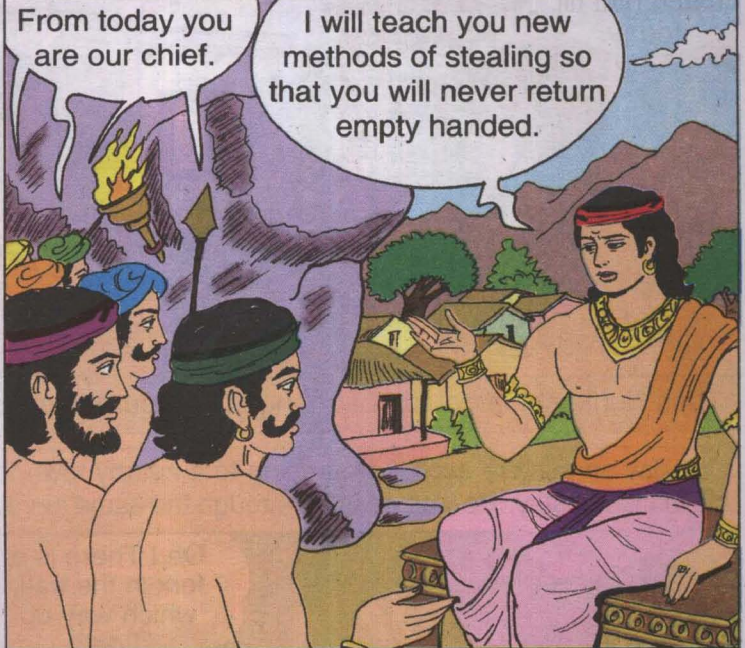


Bunkachula gave his consent.

Bunkachula stayed in the thief-colony. As days passed the chief died and impressed by his cunning and courage, the bandits chose him to be their chief.

From today you are our chief.

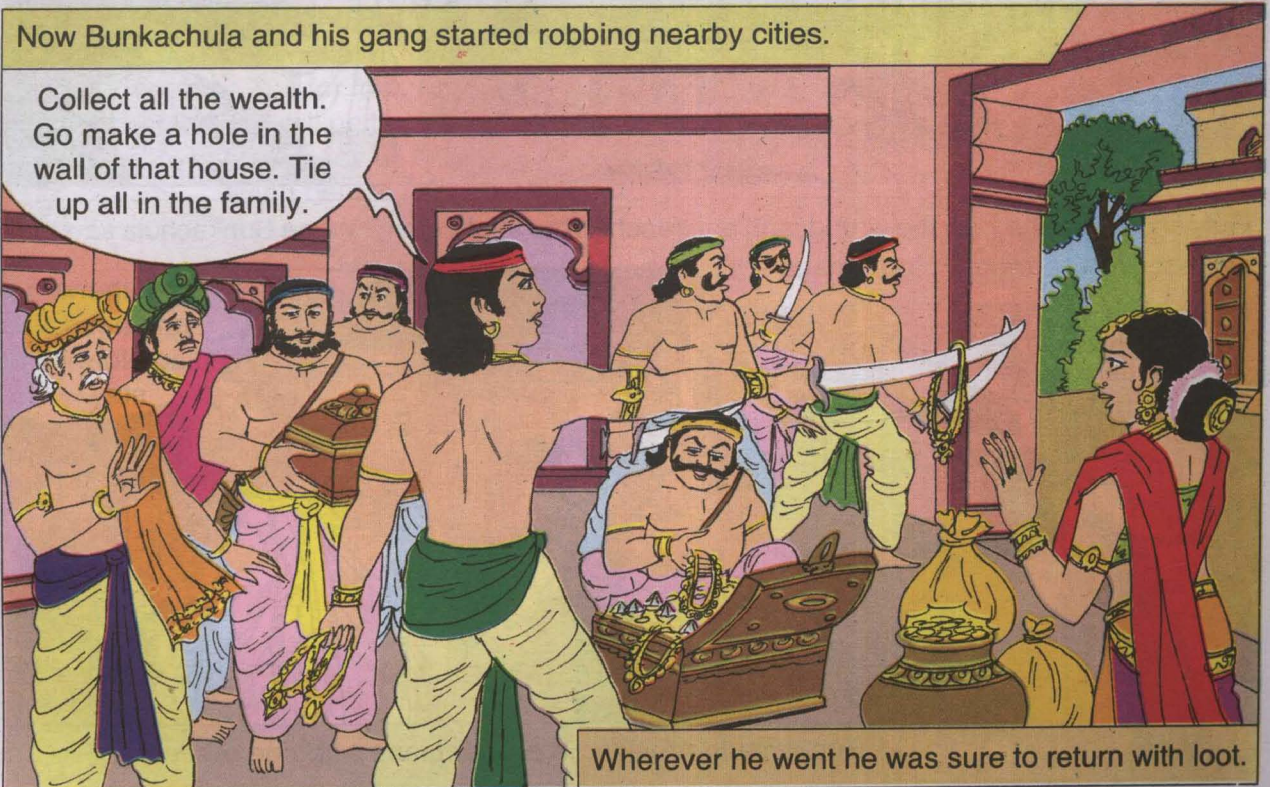
I will teach you new methods of stealing so that you will never return empty handed.



Bunkachula was an accomplished master and he soon made all members of his gang expert thieves.

Now Bunkachula and his gang started robbing nearby cities.

Collect all the wealth. Go make a hole in the wall of that house. Tie up all in the family.



Wherever he went he was sure to return with loot.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Bunkachula's terror spread in nearby towns.

No one has been able to catch him till today.

Hey ! I have never seen a bandit more cunning than Bunkachula.

Yes, brother ! From where he comes and where he goes is never known.

Thus Bunkachula could not change his nature in spite of being exiled by his father.

One day an austere ascetic was going to a nearby town for his monsoon stay. He was passing through the same jungle.

Oh ! There is a fork in the trail, which way do I go?

Out of confusion he took the wrong path and reached the thief-colony. When Bunkachula saw the Jain ascetic he bowed to pay homage –

Revered one ! What brings you here ?

I lost the way and need a place for night stay.

Bunkachula provided a proper place with due respect.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The very next morning monsoon rains started. There was water all around and it was impossible for the ascetic to go ahead. He said to Bunkachula—

If you allow, I would like to spend my monsoon stay here.

Revered one ! It is our good luck. You are welcome to stay here. Please collect your alms from our homes. But kindly do not give discourses for four months. This is because your discourses would make our people abandon stealing. That is our profession and without it how will we survive ?

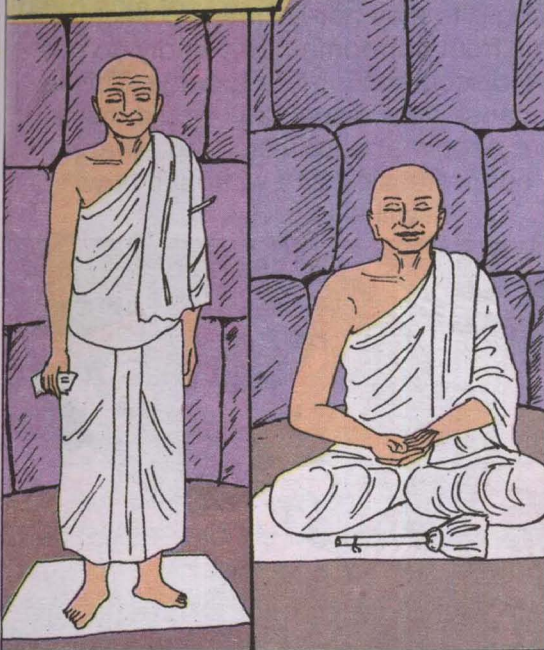
The ascetic said – All right. But you also make a promise that for four months you will neither eat meat nor kill living beings.

I accept your condition. For four months you stay here observing silence. For four months we abandon meat eating and killing beings.

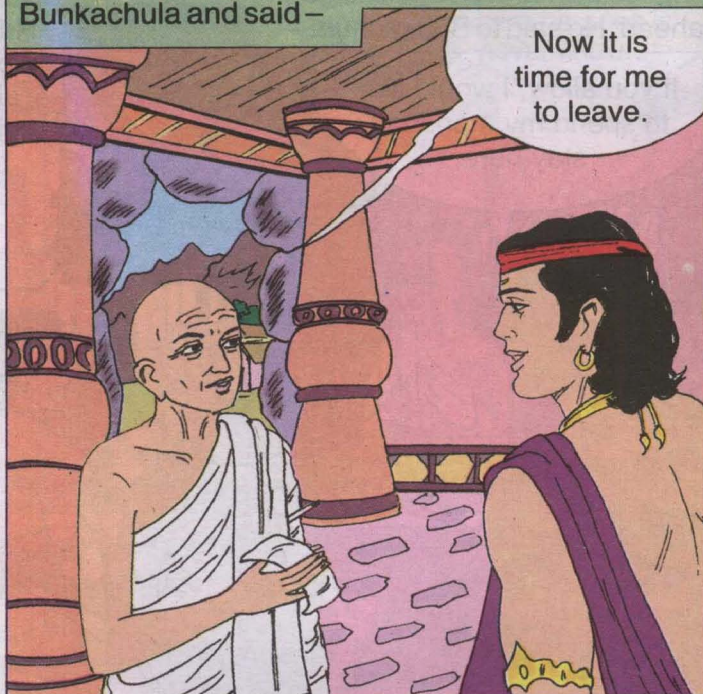
Getting this promise from Bunkachula, the ascetic decided to stay there for the monsoon period.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

For four months the ascetic stayed there and did his penance and spiritual practices.



After four months it was time to leave. He called Bunkachula and said –

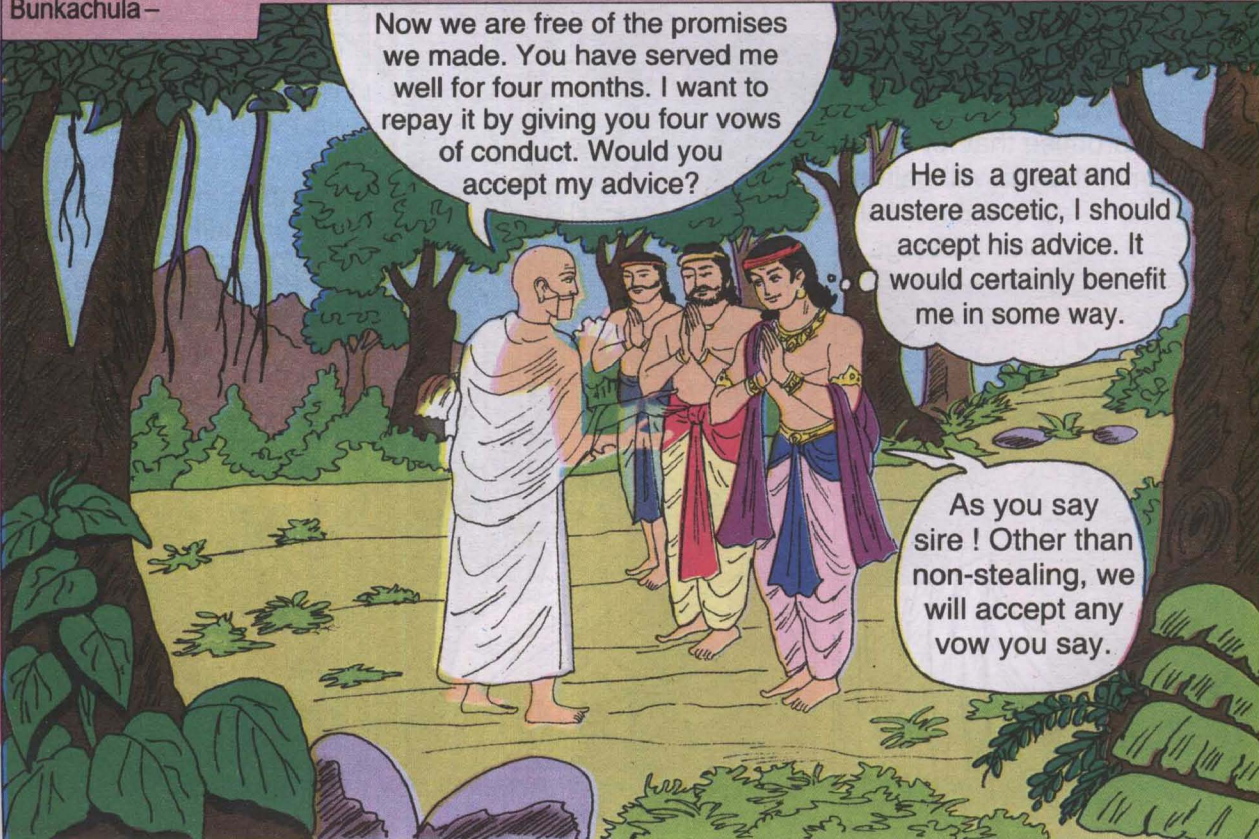


Bunkachula came to the border of the forest to bid him farewell. Once he crossed the border the ascetic said to Bunkachula –

Now we are free of the promises we made. You have served me well for four months. I want to repay it by giving you four vows of conduct. Would you accept my advice?

He is a great and austere ascetic, I should accept his advice. It would certainly benefit me in some way.

As you say sire ! Other than non-stealing, we will accept any vow you say.



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The ascetic said –

All right. Since this moment you take these four vows – (1) You will not eat any fruit about which you are ignorant. (2) Before hitting someone take seven-eight steps backward and pause for a few moments. (3) Always consider a queen to be like your mother or sister. (4) Never eat flesh of a crow.

Sire ! These are very simple codes. Please formalize my taking the vows.

The ascetic formally made Bunkachula take the four vows. Bunkachula promised to observe the vows and returned to the colony after bidding farewell to the ascetic.

Once Bunkachula came to know that a large caravan of merchants was passing through the jungle. He attacked the caravan.

Give all your belongings to us. Don't be clever or you all will die.

Take all our wealth but spare our lives.

Yes, brother ! If we are alive we will again earn wealth.

Terrified by bandits, the merchants gave them all their wealth.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Just when Bunkachula and his gang were leaving after packing the loot, king's guards arrived there and proceeded to surround them.

Stop there.
Drop your weapons.
You are surrounded.

Come ! Rush
towards the
dense forest.
We will be safe there.

All the bandits went and hid in the dense forest. After some time the guards went away. All this rush of activity made the bandits hungry. Bunkachula said –

Go and pluck
enough fruits from
the nearby trees. We
will eat and rest
here only.

The bandits brought enough sweet smelling red and yellow fruits from nearby trees.

Oh ! Their smell
is very good. We
are sure to enjoy
eating them.

What fruits are
these ? Do you
know them ? I have
never seen
such fruits.

The bandits also expressed their ignorance –

No, chief ! We also
don't know anything
about them. But they
are beautiful and
fragrant.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Hearing this, Bunkachula recalled his vow –

"Never eat unknown fruits."

Bunkachula told his companions –

I will not eat these fruits. You should also not eat.

We are very hungry. We will eat.

No, brothers ! We will obey the chief's command. We will not eat.

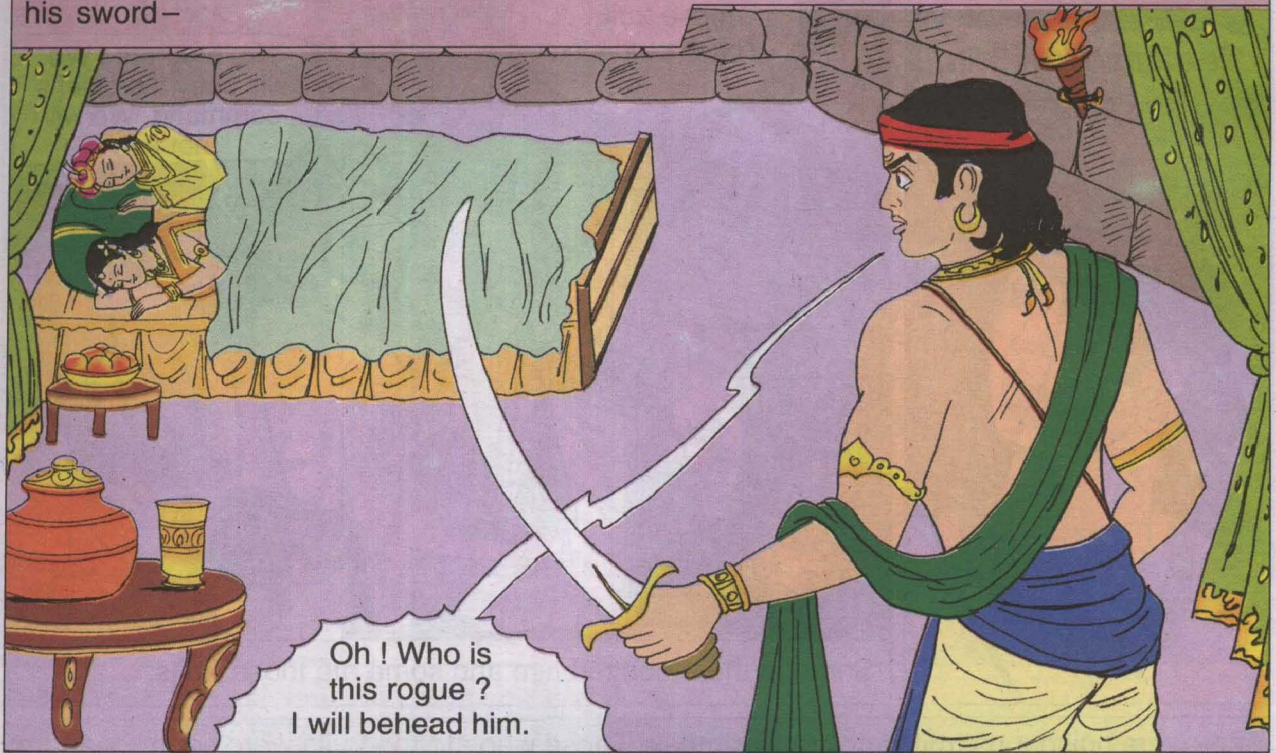
Some of them obeyed him and some ate those fruits.

They were poisonous fruits known as Kimpak. Those who ate the fruits were soon dead. In the morning when Bunkachula went to wake them up, he saw the dead ones and thought –

The vow has saved me today, otherwise I would also have died.

These fruits were poisonous. It was good that we obeyed the chief.

Bunkachula returned to the colony with his remaining bandits. The moment he entered his home he saw his wife sleeping with some man. He went mad with anger and drew his sword –

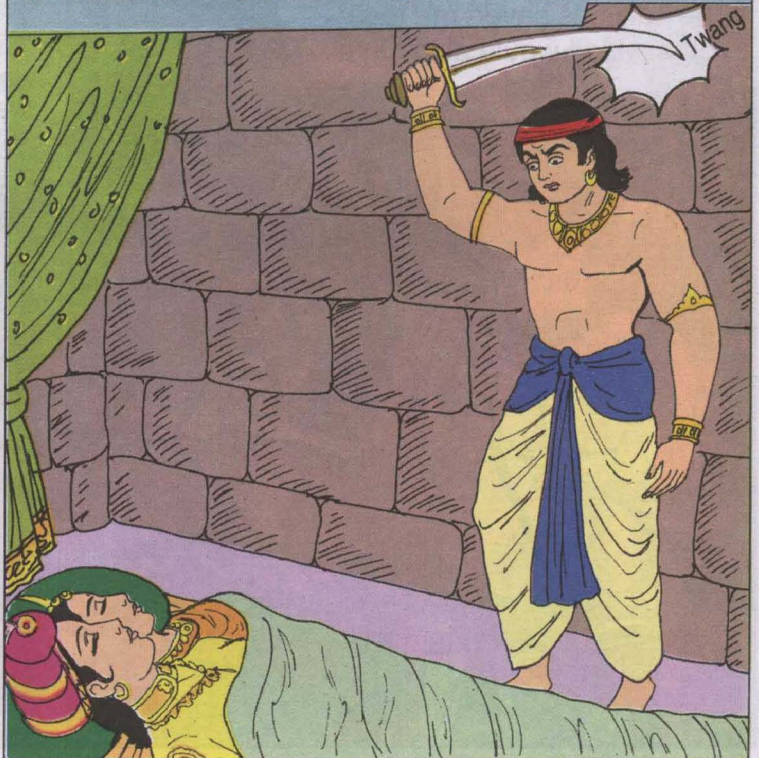


As soon as he took a step ahead he recalled his second vow –

Before hitting someone take seven-eight steps backward and pause for a few moments.

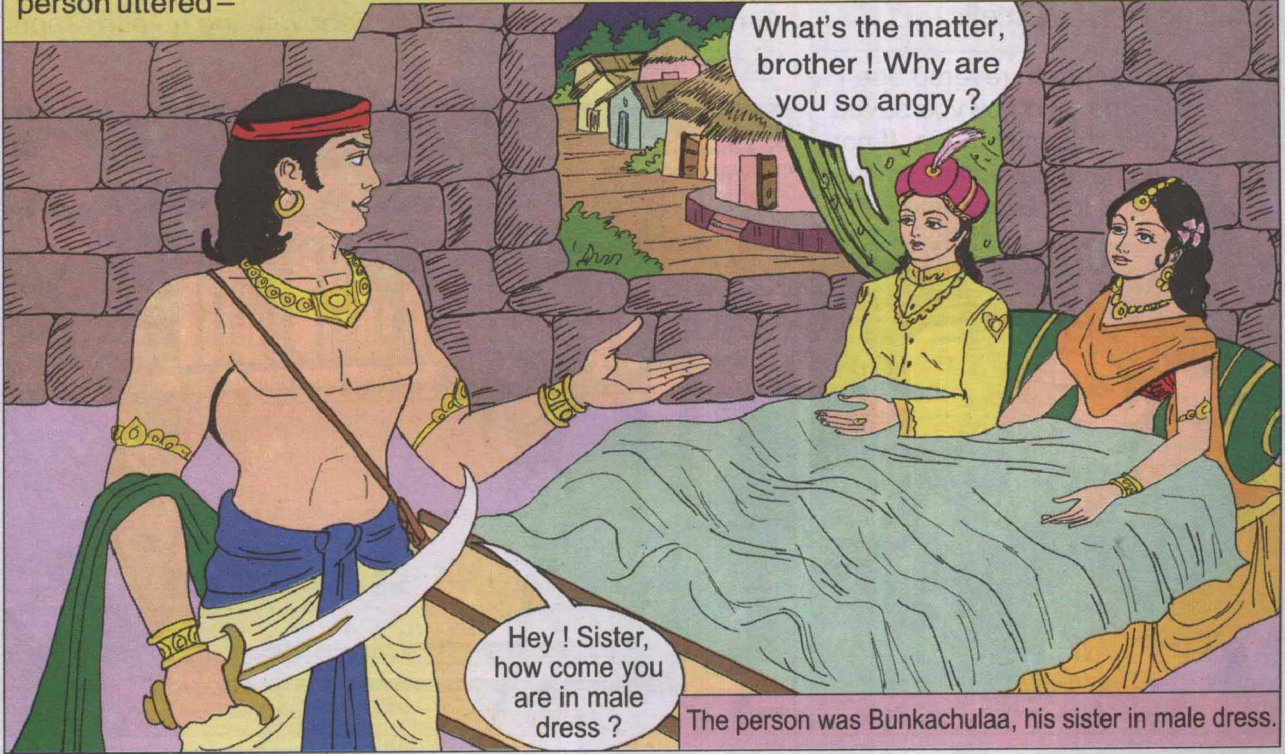


He took seven steps backwards and when he raised his sword it struck the wall on his back with a loud sound.

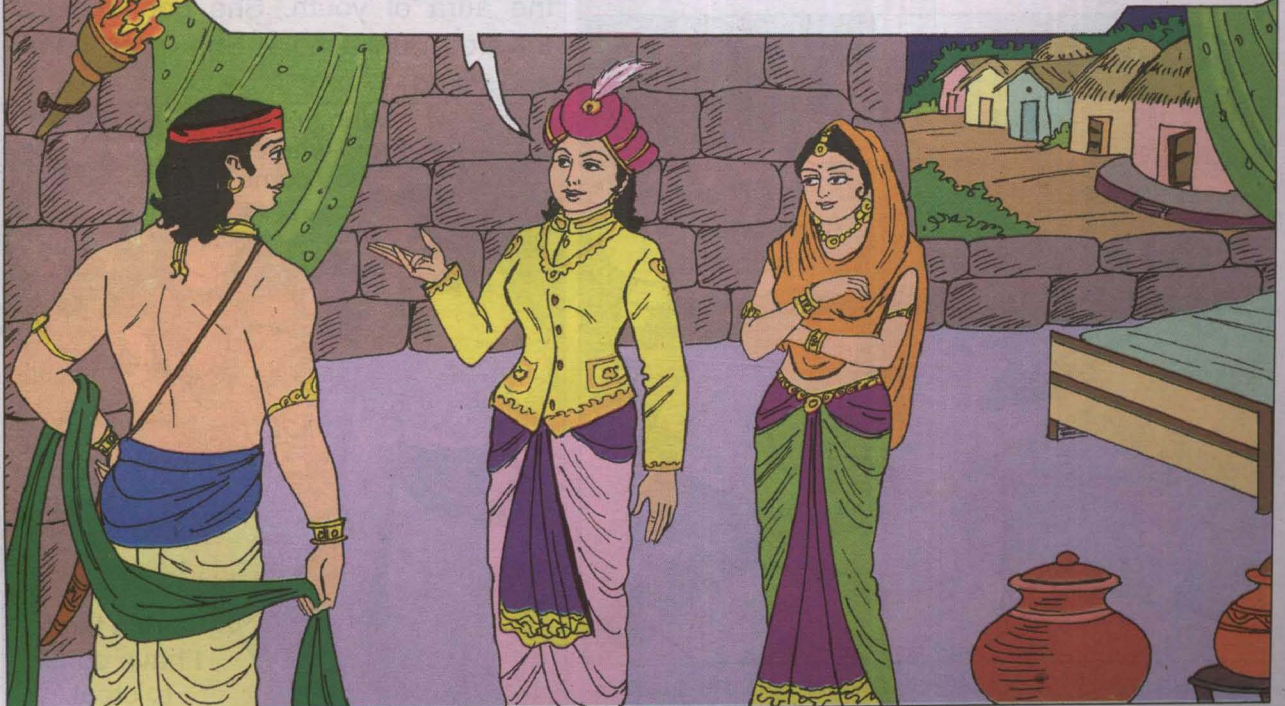


BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

His wife and the other person woke up. Seeing the fierce look on Bunkachula's face that person uttered –



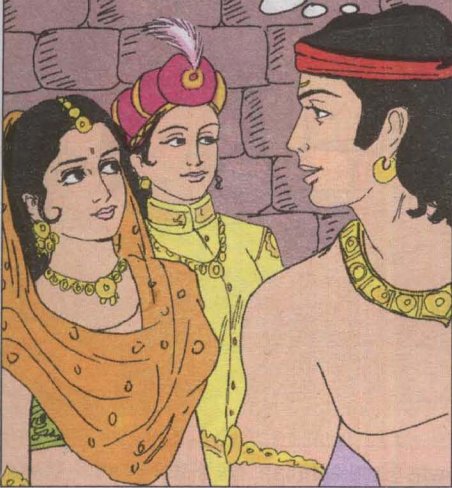
Brother ! After you left, a group of acrobats came here. Your wife and me went to see the performance. As there was no male to escort us, I dressed as male. When we returned. We were so tired that we slept without changing.



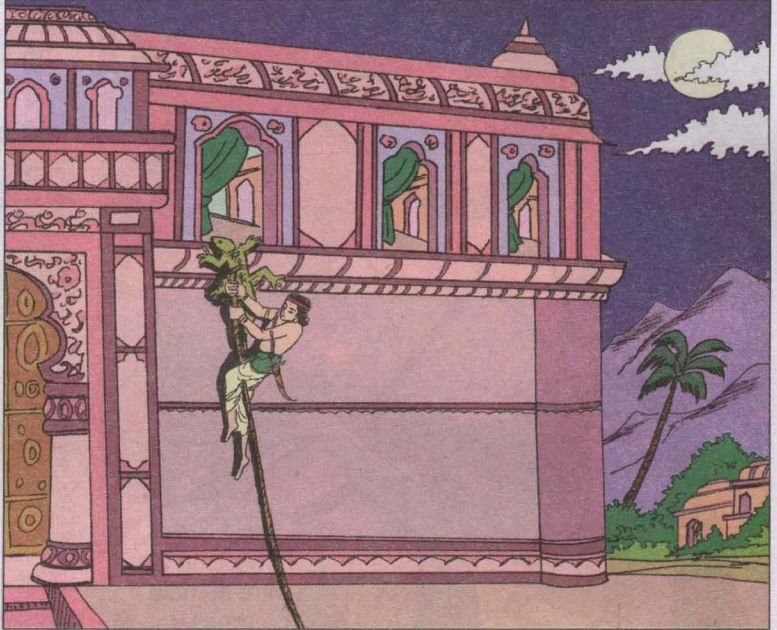
BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Hearing all this Bunkachula felt gratitude for the ascetic –

You are great, revered one !
The code given by you saved
me from this misfortune. If not,
I would have devastated myself
and lost everything.



One day Bunkachula went to Ujjaini for theft in the palace. At night he climbed up the top floor with the help the rope tied to the Goh.



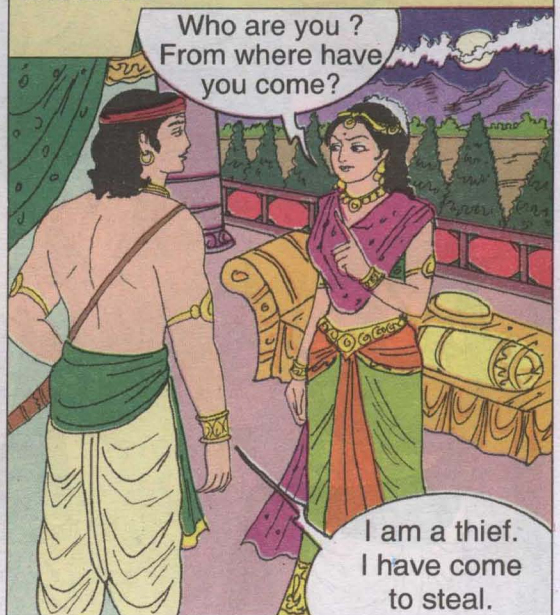
He reached the balcony of the room and peeped inside from behind the curtain. It was the king's bedchamber and the queen was sleeping alone.



Oh ! There is
someone in the
balcony.

The sound of his footsteps awakened the queen.

When she stood up and saw, she found a man with strong and youthful body. In the moonlight his face was glowing with the aura of youth. She got attracted towards Bunkachula. She acted angry and asked –



Who are you ?
From where have
you come?

I am a thief.
I have come
to steal.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The queen said –

I am the queen of this kingdom. I like you. Come let's enjoy each other. I will give you a lot of wealth.

This made Bunkachula recall the third code given by the ascetic.

Always consider a queen to be like your mother or sister.

Bunkachula said –

You are the queen mother. I am like your son.

Filled with anger, the queen said –

You are a fool. You're getting physical pleasure along with wealth. Why lose such an opportunity?

Your highness !
No matter what you say, I am sorry I cannot oblige you.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The furious queen said –

If you don't agree to what I say I will call the guards and get you arrested. You are sure to get death penalty.

I am prepared to die but I will never break my vow.

Bunkachula had witnessed the results of his firmness in following of two vows. He thought –

This is the time of my test. I will be firm on my vow, even if I lose my life.

While this exchange was going on, the king was standing behind a curtain in the bedroom and listening.

The queen shouted to call the guards and put Bunkachula in prison.

Next day Bunkachula was produced in the court. The king asked –

Tell me the truth, why did you enter the palace and what were you doing there?

Sire! I am a thief. I came to steal. Hearing my footsteps the queen woke up and got me imprisoned.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

The king thought –

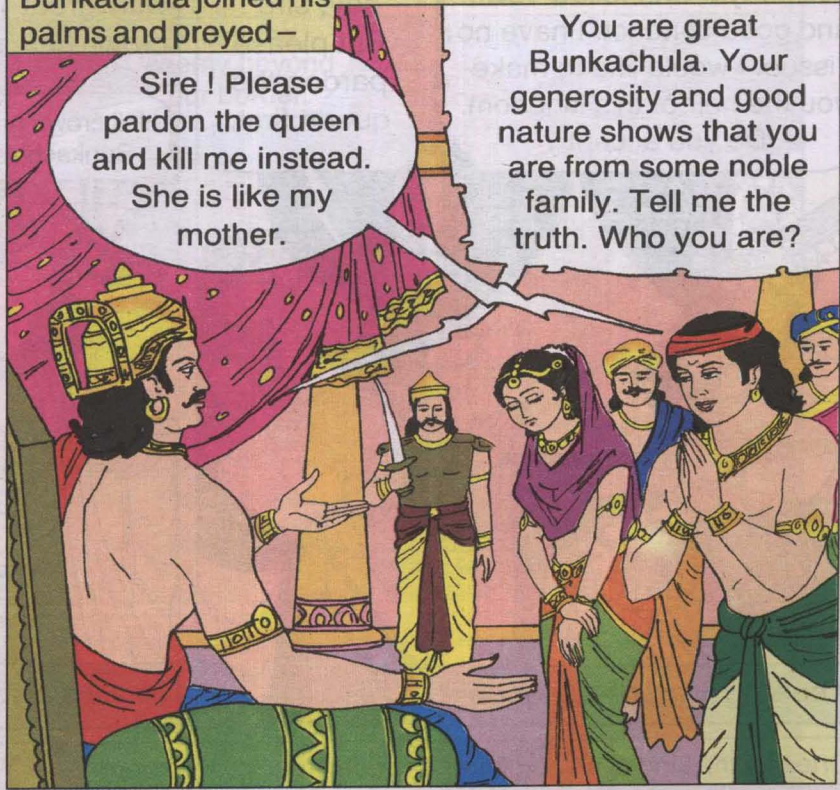
He appears to be an upright person from some good family. He didn't reveal the queen's bad character to save my honour. It is the queen who is the offender, not him.



He summoned the queen and passed death sentence. Bunkachula joined his palms and prayed –

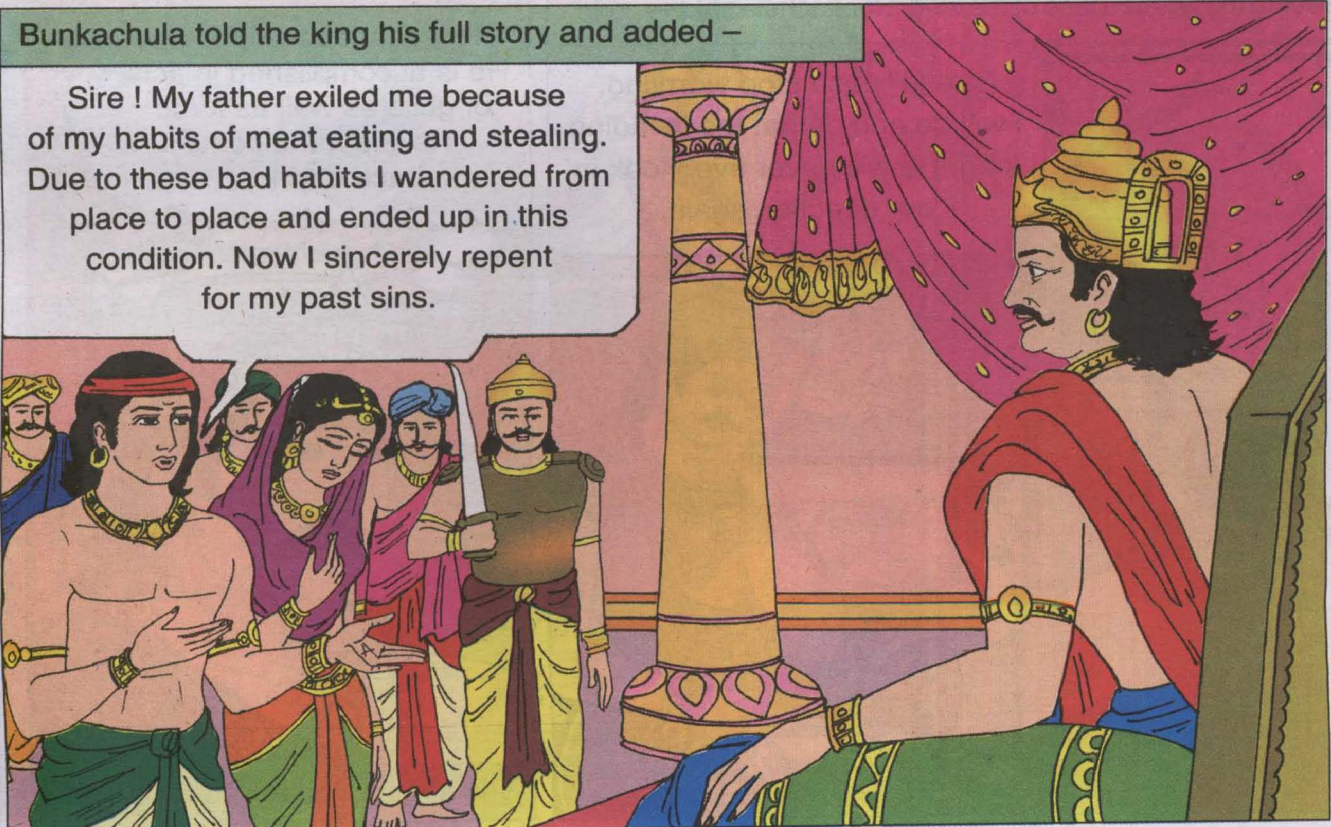
Sire ! Please pardon the queen and kill me instead. She is like my mother.

You are great Bunkachula. Your generosity and good nature shows that you are from some noble family. Tell me the truth. Who you are?



Bunkachula told the king his full story and added –

Sire ! My father exiled me because of my habits of meat eating and stealing. Due to these bad habits I wandered from place to place and ended up in this condition. Now I sincerely repent for my past sins.



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

You are the son of a Kshatriya[#] and follow vows and good conduct. I have no issue. I would like to make you the heir of this kingdom. Do you accept ?

As you say, sire ! But please pardon the queen first.



The king forgave the queen.

Bunkachula accepted the king's request and with great fanfare he was pronounced the crown prince.

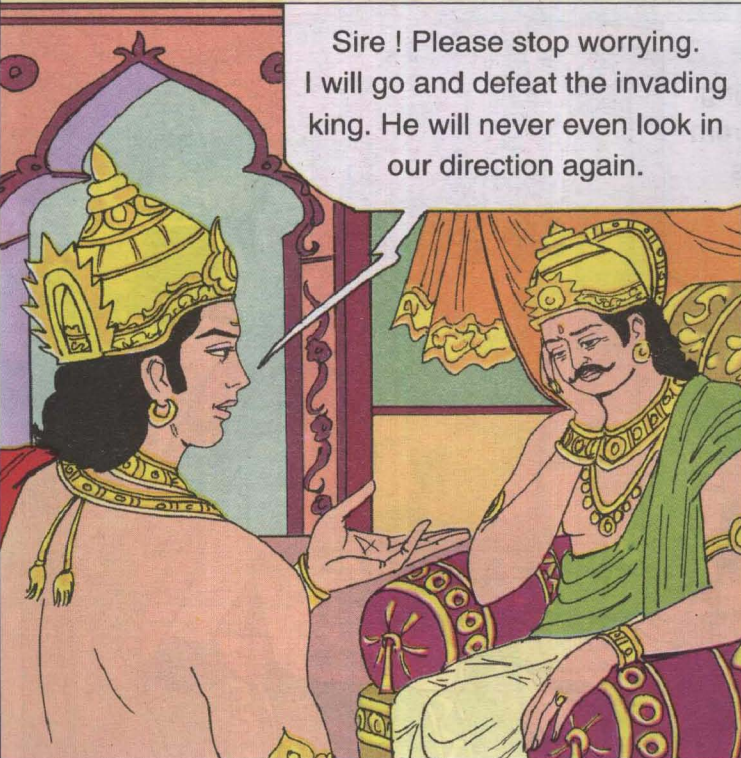
Hail crown prince Bunkachula !



Bunkachula started taking care of state affairs ethically.

One day the king of an adjoining kingdom attacked the border. Seeing the worried face of the king, Bunkachula said –

Sire ! Please stop worrying. I will go and defeat the invading king. He will never even look in our direction again.



The king thought –

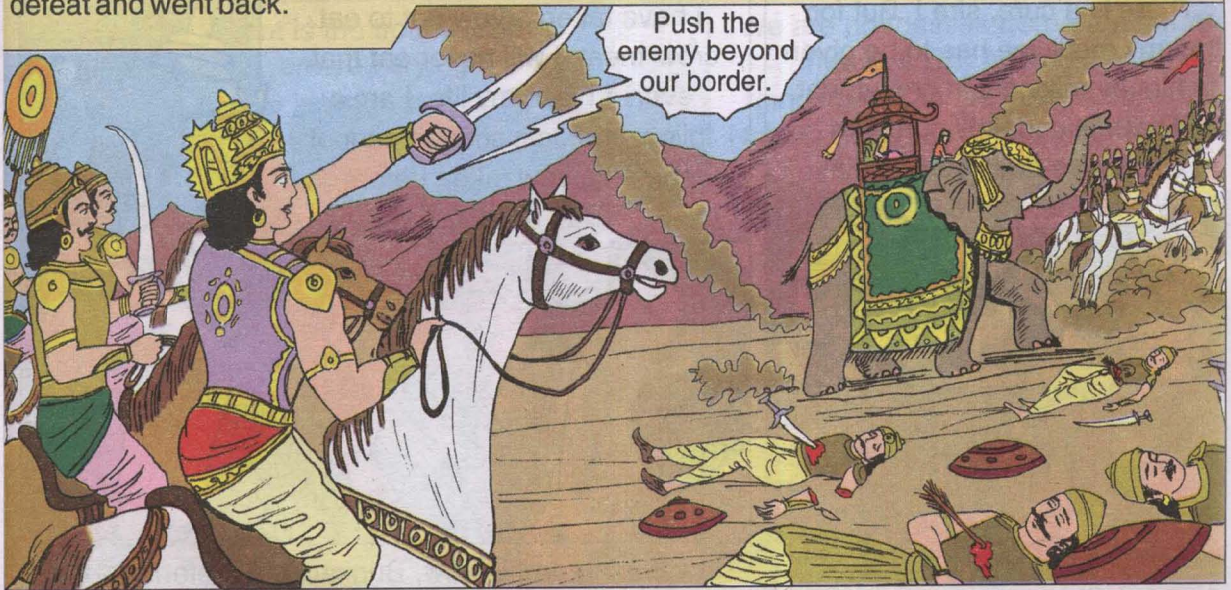
He is fearless and brave.
He is accomplished in acts of guile as well as force.
He is sure to come back a winner.



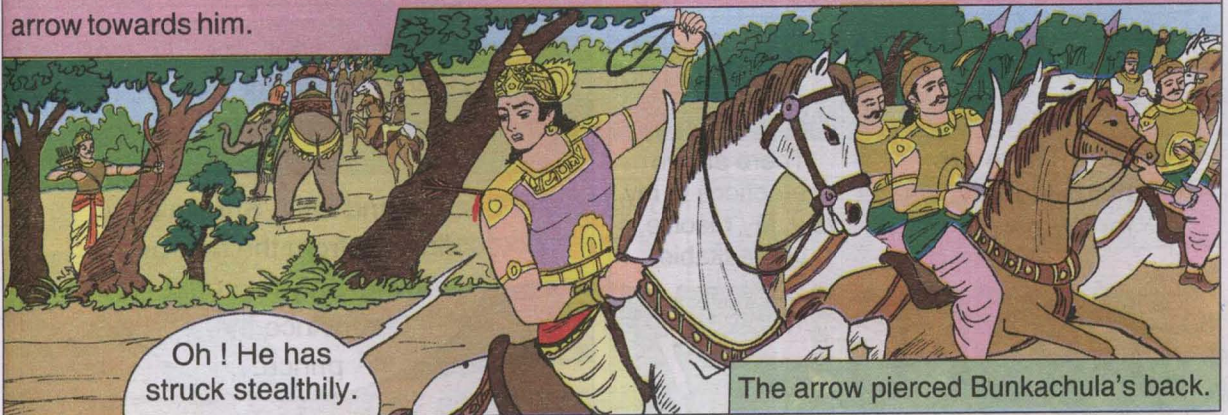
The king gave his consent.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

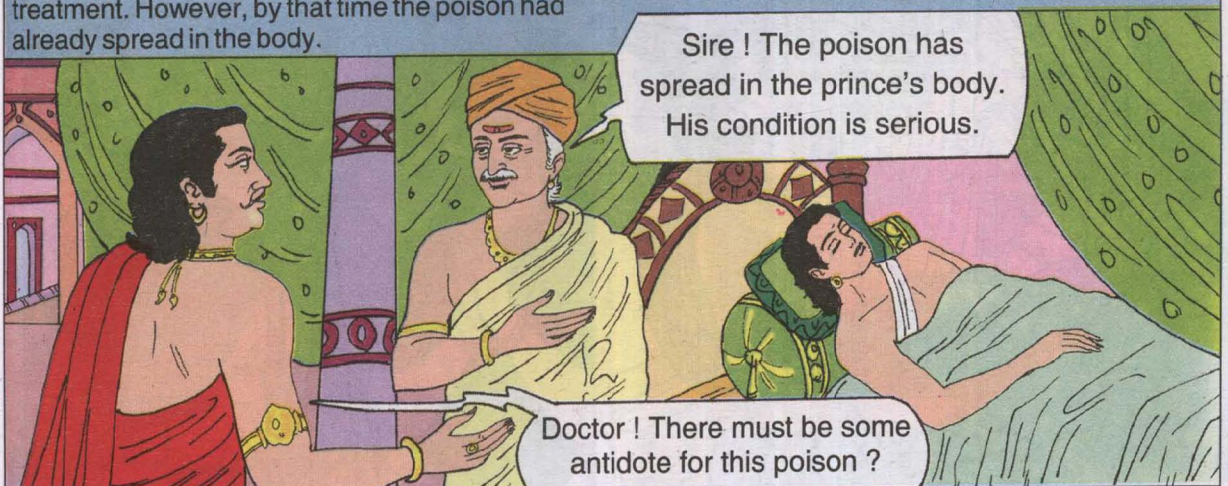
Bunkachula took the army and pushed back the aggressor. The attacking king accepted defeat and went back.



When Bunkachula was returning a soldier from the defeated army launched a poisonous arrow towards him.



Wounded Bunkachula reached the capital. The king at once called the doctors and started his treatment. However, by that time the poison had already spread in the body.



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

Doctor –

There is a cure, sire ! But for that my medicine has to be given to him by mixing it in crow-meat. That will certainly cure him. Otherwise he is sure to die.



Listening to what the doctor said, Bunkachula refused –

I have taken a vow not to eat crow-meat. I will never eat that, even if I lose my life. I am a follower of Jainism and cannot break a vow taken before an ascetic.

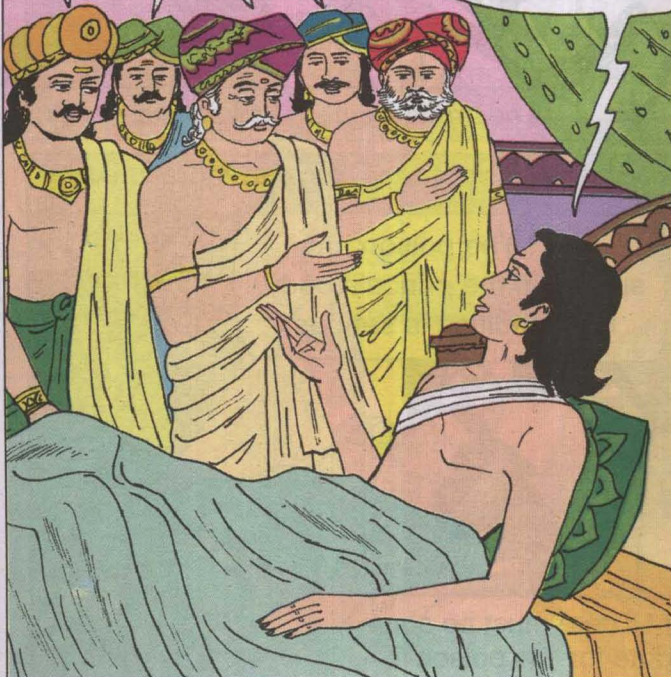


Unwavering on his vow, Bunkachula preferred to die instead of breaking his vow.

The news spread all around the city. Some Jain Shravaks (lay followers) came and tried to persuade –

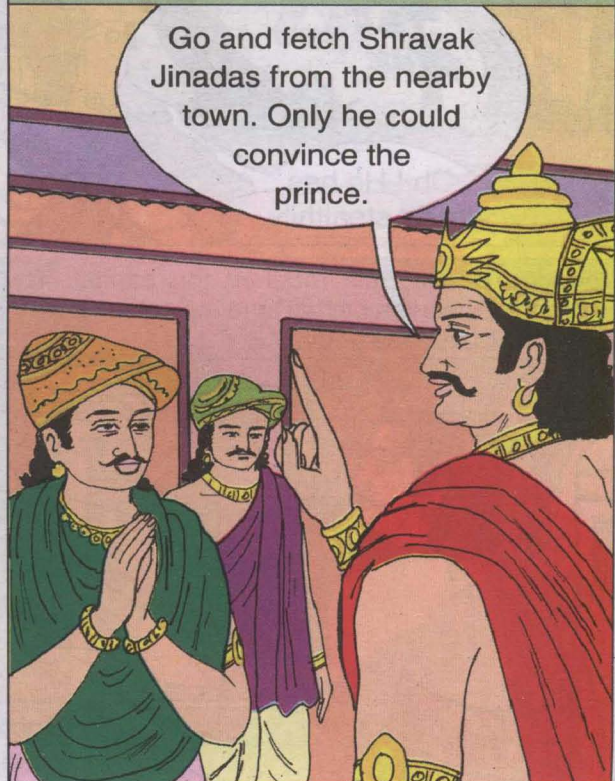
Brother ! There are exemptions in the vows for laymen.

There are no exemptions in my vow. My resolve is unbreakable.



Finally the king sent for Jinadas, a scholarly senior Shravak from a nearby town, in order to persuade Bunkachula.

Go and fetch Shravak Jinadas from the nearby town. Only he could convince the prince.



BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

On his way to Ujjaini, Jinadas saw some goddesses crying. He asked them –

What is the trouble ? Why are you crying ?

We are goddesses from Saudharma heaven. Our husband has reincarnated in the land of humans. Now Bunkachula is destined to be our husband. But you are going to convince him to break the vow. When he breaks his vow he will have a low reincarnation and will not come to be our husband. We will remain unmarried.

Jinadas said –

O divine ones ! Please don't cry. I will not convince him to break his vow. I will do nothing that would block his higher rebirth.

Jinadas proceeded to the palace in Ujjaini, went to Bunkachula and said –

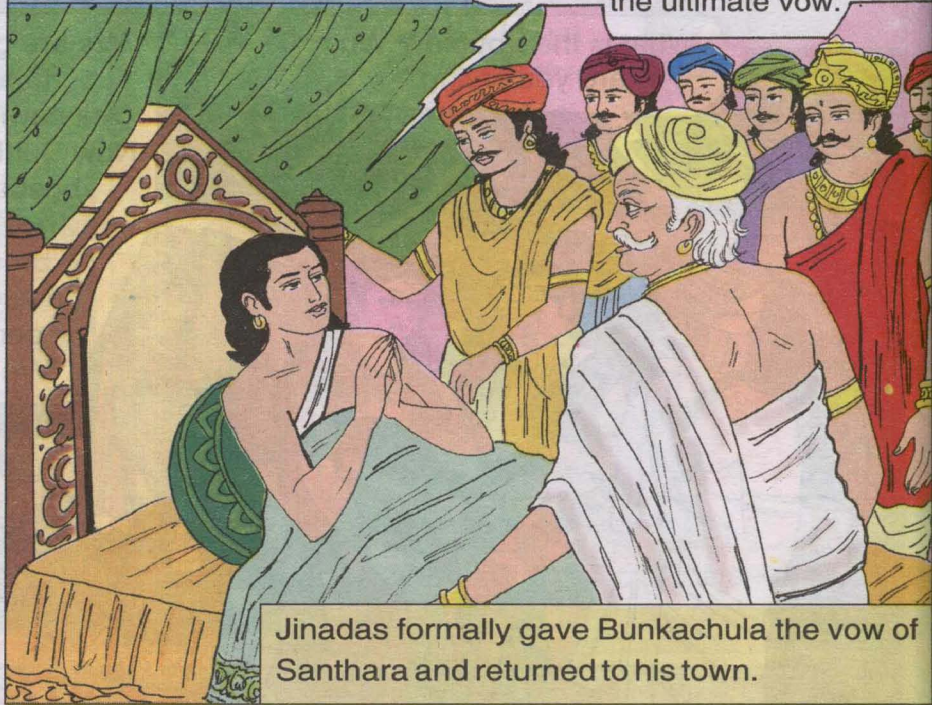
O prince ! It is all right if death consumes you, it is all right if poverty envelopes you, but never break the vow you have taken.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

O prince ! The time of your death is not far, therefore you should take Santhara#.

Bunkachula replied with joy –

You are right. Please give me the ultimate vow.

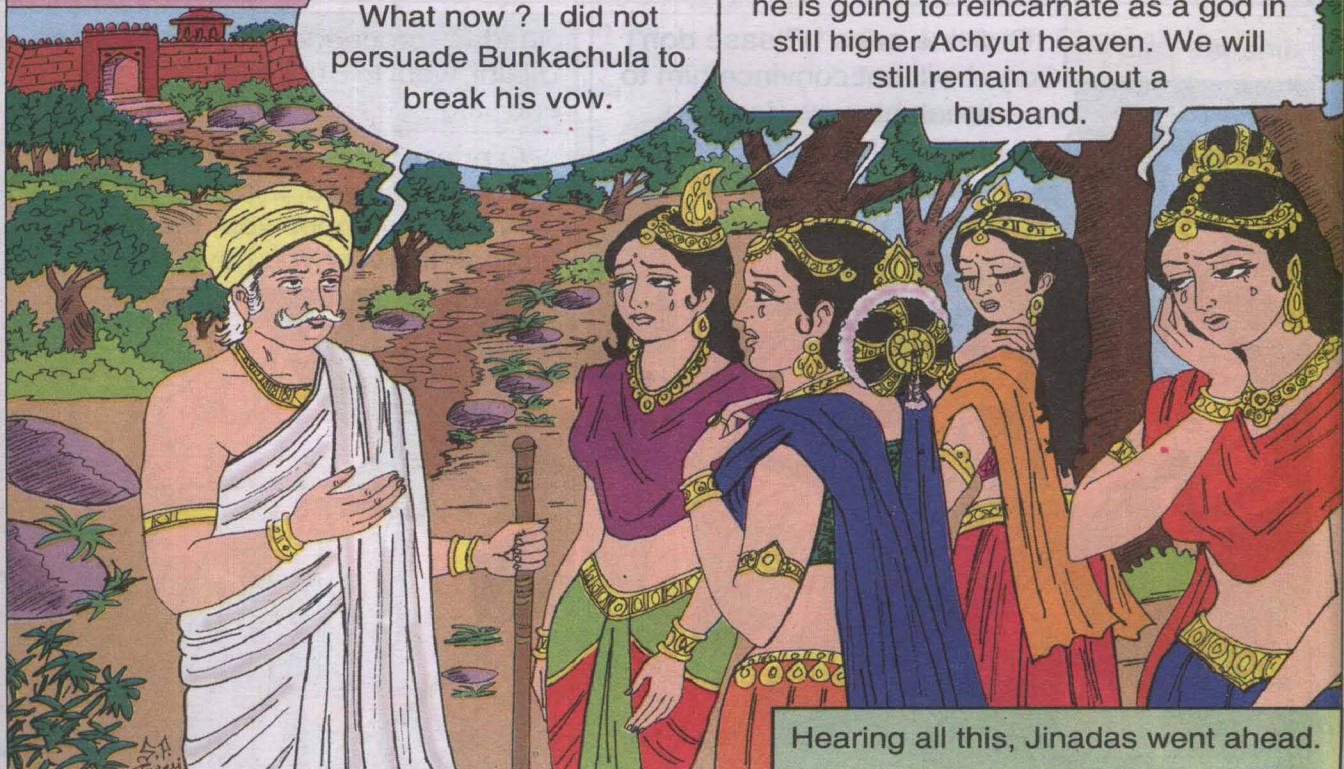


Jinadas formally gave Bunkachula the vow of Santhara and returned to his town.

On the way he again came across those goddesses, still crying. Jinadas asked –

What now ? I did not persuade Bunkachula to break his vow.

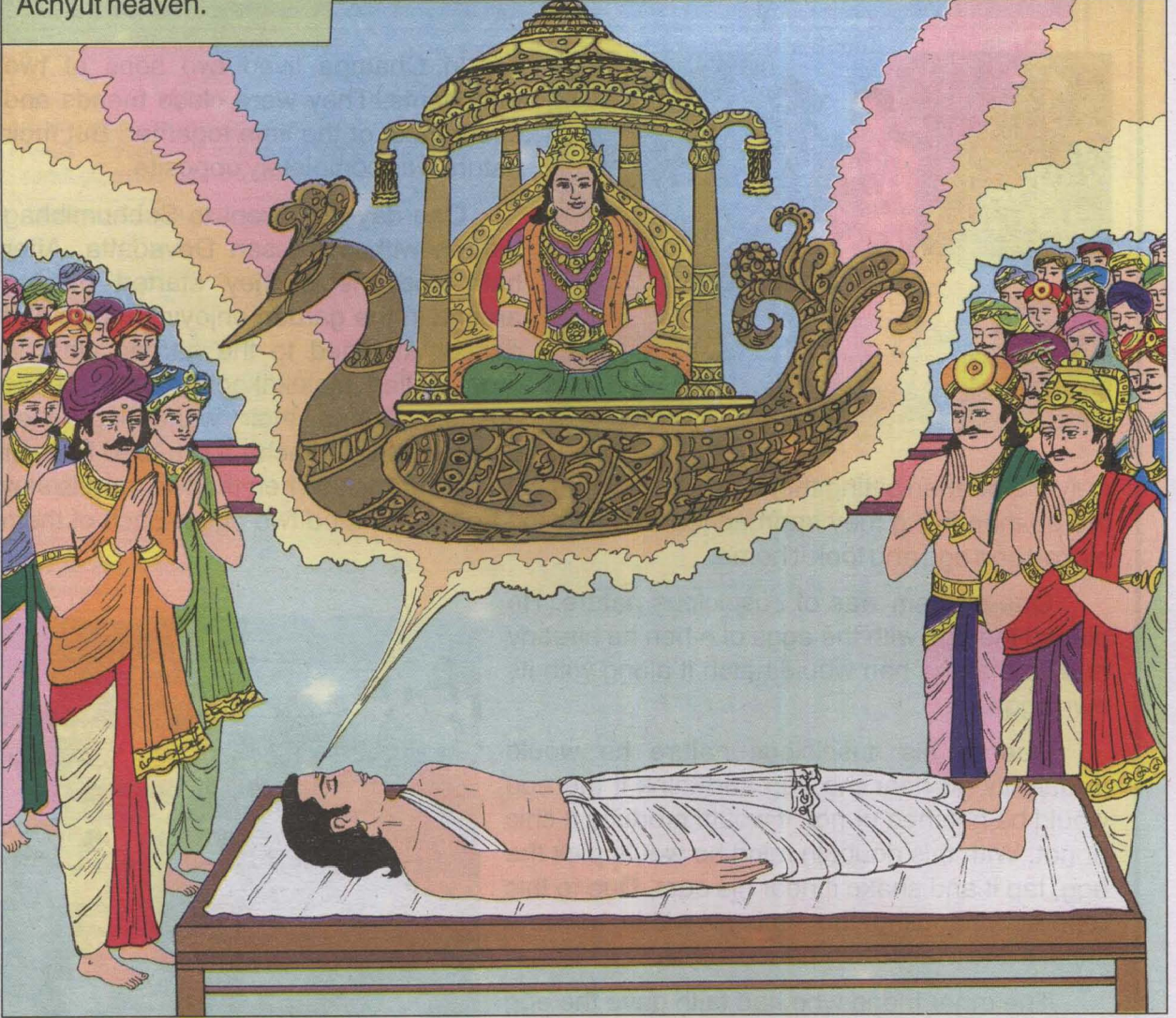
You made him take Santhara vow. Now he is even more religious. Now he is going to reincarnate as a god in still higher Achyut heaven. We will still remain without a husband.



Hearing all this, Jinadas went ahead.

BUNKACHULA (The benefits of vows and codes)

After some time, observing his vows strictly Bunkachula died and reincarnated as a god in the Achyut heaven.



कथासार Bunkachula strictly observed the vows and codes he accepted. In spite of being a thief he attained such lofty rebirth. In the same way all noble people should accept vows and codes to the best of their ability and observe them strictly. This story specially inspires one to abandon meat, wine and other harmful things as well as observing the vows of celibacy and non-stealing.

THE END

શ્રદ્ધા-અશ્રદ્ધા



In Champa lived two sons of two merchants. They were close friends and spent most of the time together. But their nature was completely opposite.

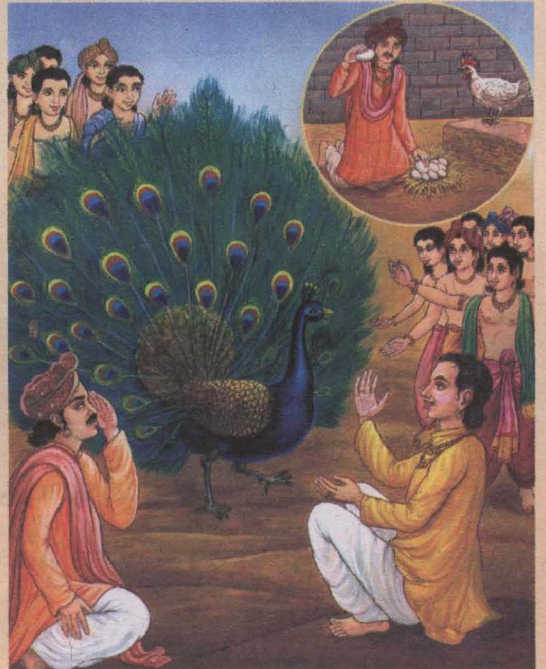
One day they went to Subhumibhag garden with courtesan Devadatta. After bath and meals they started moving around in the garden enjoying music and dance. Attached to the garden was an area, called Malukakachh, with dense bushes. During their wanderings they came to Malukakachh. Disturbed by their

arrival a peahen sitting there, flew up and sat on a tree branch. When the two friends saw the peahen flying they approached it. Under the tree they found two eggs. Each of them picked one egg and took it home.

One of them was of suspicious nature. He placed the egg with the eggs of a hen he already had so that the hen would hatch it along with its own eggs.

Due to his suspicious nature he would frequently go near the egg and think if the egg would be hatched or not, it would produce a chic or not. With this doubt in mind he would pick the egg, tap it and shake it near his ears. Due to this repeated handling the embryo within became lifeless and it failed to produce a chic.

The other friend who had faith gave the egg to the peacock keeper. At proper time the egg produced a chic. As it grew, the keeper trained it to dance and perform other tricks. Soon this peacock became famous in the city. This second friend was happy to see the performance of his peacock.



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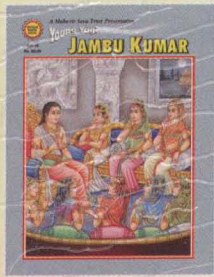
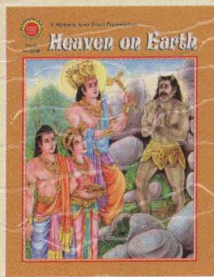
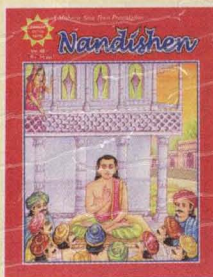
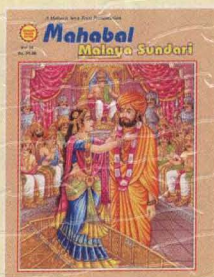
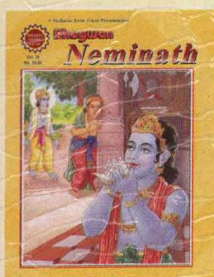
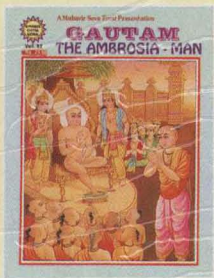
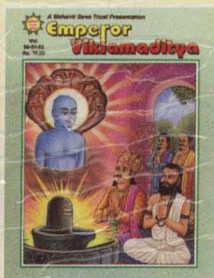
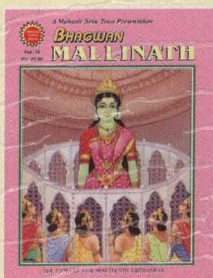
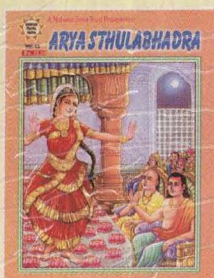
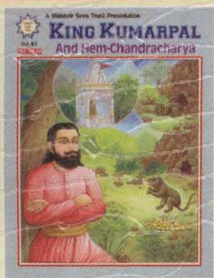
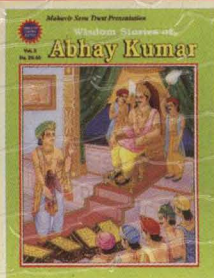
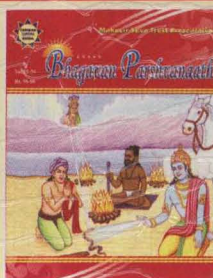
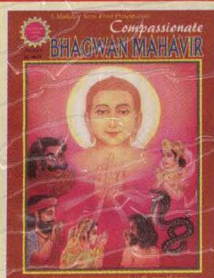
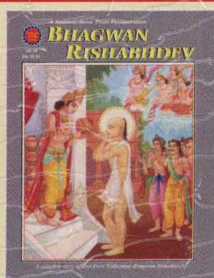
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